BOOK · OF GOLDEN · DEEDS

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A BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS

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A BOOK OF
GOLDEN DEEDS.

WHAT IS A GOLDEN DEED?

We all of us enjoy a story of battle and adventure. Some of us delight in the anxiety and excitement with which we watch the various strange predicaments, hair-breadth escapes and ingenious contrivances that are presented to us; and the mere imaginary dread of the dangers thus depicted, stirs our feelings and makes us feel eager and full of suspense.

This taste, though it is the first step above the dullness that cannot be interested in anything beyond its own immediate world, nor care for what it neither sees, touches, tastes, nor puts to any present use, is still the lowest form that such a liking can take. It may be no better than a love of reading about murders in the newspaper, just for the sake of a sort of startled sensation; and it is a taste that becomes unwholesome when it absolutely delights in dwelling on horrors and cruelties for their own sake; or upon shifty, cunning, dishonest stratagems and devices. To learn to take interest in what is evil is always mischievous.

But there is an element in many of such scenes of woe and violence that may well account for our interest in them. It is that which makes the eye gleam and the heart throb, and bears us through the details of suffering, bloodshed, and even barbarity—feeling our spirits moved and elevated by contemplating the courage and endurance that they have called forth. Nay, such is the charm of brilliant valor that we often are tempted to forget the injustice of the cause that may have called forth the actions that delight us. And this enthusiasm is often united with the utmost tenderness of heart, the very appreciation of suffering only quickening the sense of the heroism that risked the utmost, till the young and ardent learn absolutely to look upon danger as an occasion for evincing the highest qualities.

> "O Life, without thy checker'd scene
> Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
> Success and failure, could a ground
> For magnanimity be found?"

The true cause of such enjoyment is perhaps an inherent consciousness that there is nothing so noble as forgetfulness of self. Therefore it is that we are struck by hearing of the exposure of life and limb to the utmost peril, in oblivion, or recklessness of personal safety, in comparison with a higher object.

That object is sometimes unworthy. In the lowest form of courage it is only avoidance of disgrace; but even fear of shame is better than mere love of bodily ease, and from that

lowest motive the scale rises to the most noble and precious actions of which human nature is capable—the truly golden and priceless deeds that are the jewels of history, the salt of life.

And it is a chain of Golden Deeds that we seek to lay before our readers; but, ere entering upon them, perhaps we had better clearly understand what it is that to our mind constitutes a Golden Deed.

It is not mere hardihood. There was plenty of hardihood in Pizarro when he led his men through terrible hardships to attack the empire of Peru, but he was actuated by mere greediness for gain, and all the perils he so resolutely endured could not make his courage admirable. It was nothing but insensibility to danger, when set against the wealth and power that he coveted, and to which he sacrificed thousands of helpless Peruvians. Daring for the sake of plunder has been found in every robber, every pirate, and too often in all the lower grade of warriors, from the savage plunderer of a besieged town up to the reckless monarch making war to feed his own ambition.

There is a courage that breaks out in bravado, the exuberance of high spirits, delighting in defying peril for its own sake, not indeed producing deeds which deserve to be called golden, but which, from their heedless grace, their desperation, and absence of all base motives—except perhaps vanity—have an undeniable charm about them, even when we doubt the right of exposing a life in mere gayety of heart.

Such was the gallantry of the Spanish knight who, while Fernando and Isabel lay before the Moorish city of Granada, galloped out of the camp, in full view of besiegers and besieged, and fastened to the gate of the city with his dagger a copy of the Ave Maria. It was a wildly brave action, and yet not without service in showing the dauntless spirit of the Christian army. But the same can hardly be said of the daring shown by the Emperor Maximilian when he displayed himself to the citizens of Ulm upon the topmost pinnacle of their cathedral spire; or of Alonso de Ojeda, who figured in like manner upon the tower of the Spanish cathedral. The same daring afterward carried him in the track of Columbus, and there he stained his name with the usual blots of rapacity and cruelty. These deeds, if not tinsel, were little better than gold leaf.

A Golden Deed must be something more than mere display of fearlessness. Grave and resolute fulfillment of duty is required to give it the true weight. Such duty kept the sentinel at his post at the gate of Pompeii, even when the stifling dust of ashes came thicker and thicker from the volcano, and the liquid mud streamed down, and the people fled and struggled on, and still the sentry stood at his post, unflinching, till death had stiffened his limbs; and his bones, in their helmet and breastplate, with the hand still raised to keep the suffocating dust from mouth and nose, have remained even till our own times to show how a Roman soldier did his duty. In like

manner the last of the old Spanish infantry originally formed by the Great Captain, Gonzalo de Cordova, were all cut off, standing fast to a man, at the battle of Rocroy, in 1643, not one man breaking his rank. The whole regiment was found lying in regular order upon the field of battle, with their colonel, the old Count de Fuentes, at their head, expiring in a chair, in which he had been carried, because he was too infirm to walk, to this his twentieth battle. The conqueror, the high-spirited young Duke d'Enghien, afterwards Prince of Conde, exclaimed, "Were I not a victor, I should have wished thus to die?" and preserved the chair among the relics of the bravest of his own fellow-countrymen.

Such obedience at all costs and all risks is, however, the very essence of a soldier's life. An army could not exist without it, a ship could not sail without it, and millions upon millions of those whose "bones are dust and good swords are rust" have shown such resolution. It is the solid material, but it has hardly the exceptional brightness of a Golden Deed.

And yet perhaps it is one of the most remarkable characteristics of a Golden Deed that the doer of it is certain to feel it merely a duty: "I have done that which it was my duty to do" is the natural answer of those capable of such actions. They have been constrained to them by duty, or by pity; have never even deemed it possible to act otherwise, and did not once think of themselves in the matter at all.

For the true metal of a Golden Deed is self-devotion. Selfishness is the dross and alloy that gives the unsound ring to many an act that has been called glorious. And, on the other hand, it is not only the valor, which meets a thousand enemies upon the battle-field, or scales the walls in a forlorn hope, that is of true gold. It may be, but often it is mere greed of fame, fear of shame, or lust of plunder. No, it is the spirit that gives itself for others—the temper that for the sake of religion, of country, of duty, of kindred, nay, of pity even to a stranger, will dare all things, risk all things, endure all things, meet death in one moment, or wear life away in slow, persevering tendance and suffering.

Such a spirit was shown by Leæna, the Athenian woman at whose house the overthrow of the tyranny of the Pisistratids was concerted, and who, when seized and put to the torture that she might disclose the secrets of the conspirators, fearing that the weakness of her frame might overpower her resolution, actually bit off her tongue, that she might be unable to betray the trust placed in her. The Athenians commemorated her truly golden silence by raising in her honor the statue of a lioness without a tongue, in allusion to her name, which signifies a lioness.

Again, Rome had a tradition of a lady whose mother was in prison under sentence of death by hunger, but who, at the peril of her own life, visited her daily, and fed her from her own bosom, until even the stern senate were

moved with pity, and granted a pardon. The same story is told of a Greek lady, called Euphrasia, who thus nourished her father; and in Scotland in 1401, when the unhappy heir of the kingdom, David, Duke of Rothsay, had been thrown into the dungeon of Falkland Castle by his barbarous uncle, the Duke of Albany, there to be starved to death, his only helper was one poor peasant woman, who, undeterred by fear of the savage men that guarded the castle, crept, at every safe opportunity, to the grated window on a level with the ground, and dropped cakes through it to the prisoner, while she allayed his thirst from her own breast through a pipe. Alas! the visits were detected, and the Christian prince had less mercy than the heathen senate. Another woman, in 1450, when Sir Gilles of Brittany was savagely imprisoned and starved in much the same manner by his brother, Duke Francois, sustained him for several days by bringing wheat in her veil, and dropping it through the grated window, and when poison had been used to hasten his death, she brought a priest to the grating to enable him to make his peace with Heaven. Tender pity make these women venture all things; and surely their doings were full of the gold of love.

So again two Swiss lads, whose father was dangerously ill, found that they could by no means procure the needful medicine, except at a price far beyond their means, and heard that an English traveler had offered a large price for a couple of eaglets. The only eyrie

was on a crag supposed to be so inaccessible, that no one ventured to attempt it, till these boys, in their intense anxiety for their father, dared the fearful danger, scaled the precipice, captured the birds, and safely conveyed them to the traveler. Truly this was a deed of gold.

Such was the action of the Russian servant whose master's carriage was pursued by wolves, and who sprang out among the beasts, sacrificing his own life willingly to slake their fury for a few minutes in order that the horses might be untouched, and convey his master to a place of safety. But his act of self-devotion has been so beautifully expanded in the story of "Eric's Grave," in "Tales of Christian Heroism," that we can only hint at it, as at that of "the Helmsman of Lake Erie," who, with the steamer on fire around him, held fast by the wheel in the very jaws of the flame, so as to guide the vessel into harbor, and save the many lives within her, at the cost of his own fearful agony, while slowly scorched by the flames.

Memorable, too, was the compassion that kept Dr. Thompson upon the battle-field of the Alma, all alone throughout the night, striving to alleviate the sufferings and attend to the wants, not of our own wounded, but of the enemy, some of whom, if they were not sorely belied, had been known to requite a friendly act of assistance with a pistol-shot. Thus to remain in the darkness, on a battle-field in an enemy's country, among the enemy them-

selves, all for pity and mercy's sake, was one of the noblest acts that history can show. Yet, it was paralleled in the time of the Indian Mutiny, when every English man and woman was flying from the rage of the Sepoys at Benares, and Dr. Hay alone remained because he would not desert the patients in the hospital, whose life depended on his care—many of them of those very native corps who were advancing to massacre him. This was the Roman sentry's firmness, more voluntary and more glorious. Nor may we pass by her to whom our title-page points as our living type of Golden Deeds—to her who first showed how woman's ministrations of mercy may be carried on, not only within the city, but on the borders of the camp itself—"the lady with the lamp," whose health and strength were freely devoted to the holy work of softening the after-sufferings that render war so hideous; whose very step and shadow carried gladness and healing to the sick soldier, and who has opened a path of like shining light to many another woman who only needed to be shown the way. Fitly, indeed, may the figure of Florence Nightingale be shadowed forth at the opening of our roll of Golden Deeds.

Thanks be to God, there is enough of His own spirit of love abroad in the earth to make Golden Deeds of no such rare occurrence, but that they are of "all time." Even heathen days were not without them, and how much more should they not abound after the words have been spoken, "Greater love hath no man

than this, that he lay down his life for his friend," and, after the one Great Deed has been wrought that has consecrated all other deeds of self-sacrifice. Of martyrdoms we have scarcely spoken. They were truly deeds of the purest gold; but they are too numerous to be dwelt on here; and even as soldiers deem it each man's simple duty to face death unhesitatingly, so "the glorious army of martyrs" had, for the most part, joined the Church with the expectation that they should have to confess the faith, and confront the extremity of death and torture for it.

What have been here brought together are chiefly cases of self-devotion that stand out remarkably, either from their hopelessness, their courage, or their patience, varying with the character of their age; but with that one essential distinction in all, that the dross of self was cast away.

Among these we cannot forbear mentioning the poor American soldier, who, grievously wounded, had just been laid in the middle bed, by far the most comfortable of the three tiers of berths in the ship's cabin in which the wounded were to be conveyed to New York. Still thrilling with the suffering of being carried from the field, and lifted to his place, he saw a comrade in even worse plight brought in, and thinking of the pain it must cost his fellow-soldier to be raised to the bed above

him, he surprised his kind lady nurses (daily scatterers of Golden Deeds) by saying, "Put me up there, I reckon I'll bear hoisting better than he will."

And, even as we write, we hear of an American Railway collision that befell a train on the way to Elmira with prisoners. The engineer, whose name was William Ingram, might have leapt off and saved himself before the shock; but he remained in order to reverse the engine, though with certain death staring him in the face. He was buried in the wreck of the meeting train, and when found, his back was against the boiler—he was jammed in, unable to move, and actually being burnt to death; but even in that extremity of anguish he called out to those who came round to help him to keep away, as he expected the boiler would burst. They disregarded the generous cry, and used every effort to extricate him, but could not succeed until after his sufferings had ended in death.

While men and women still exist who will thus suffer and thus die, losing themselves in the thought of others, surely the many forms of woe and misery with which this earth is spread do but give occasions of working out some of the highest and best qualities of which mankind are capable. And oh, young readers, if your hearts burn within you as you read of these various forms of the truest and deepest glory, and you long for time and place to act in the like devoted way, bethink yourselves that the alloy of such actions is to be con-

stantly worked away in daily life; and that if ever it be your lot to do a Golden Deed, it will probably be in unconsciousness that you are doing anything extraordinary, and that the whole impulse will consist in the having absolutely forgotten self.

THE STORIES OF ALCESTIS AND ANTIGONE.

It has been said, that even the heathens saw and knew the glory of self-devotion; and the Greeks had two early instances so very beautiful that, though they can not in all particulars be true, they must not be passed over. There must have been some foundation for them, though we cannot now disentangle them from the fable that has adhered to them; and, at any rate, the ancient Greeks believed them, and gathered strength and nobleness from dwelling on such examples; since, as it has been truly said, "Every word, look, or thought of sympathy with heroic action, helps to make heroism." Both tales were represented before them in their solemn religious tragedies, and the noble poetry in which they were recounted by the great Greek dramatists has been preserved to our time.

Alcestis was the wife of Admetus, King of Pheræ, who, according to the legend, was assured that his life might be prolonged, provided father, mother, or wife would die in his stead. It was Alcestis alone who was willing freely to give her life to save that of her husband; and her devotion is thus exquisitely described in the following translation, by Profes-

sor Anstice, from the choric song in the tragedy by Euripides:—

"Be patient, for thy tears are vain—
They may not wake the dead again:
E'en heroes, of immortal sire
And mortal mother born, expire.
Oh, she was dear
While she linger'd here;
She is dear now she rests below,
And thou mayst boast
That the bride thou hast lost
Was the noblest earth can show.

"'We will not look on her burial sod
As the cell of sepulchral sleep,
It shall be as the shrine of a radiant god,
And the pilgrim shall visit that blest abode
To worship and not to weep;
And as he turns his steps aside,
Thus shall he breathe his vow:
'Here sleeps a self-devoted bride,
Of old to save her lord she died.
She is a spirit now.
Hail, bright and blest one! grant to me
The smiles of glad prosperity.'
Thus shall he own her name divine,
Thus bend him at Alcestis' shrine."

The story, however, bore that Hercules, descending in the course of one of his labors into the realms of the dead, rescued Alcestis, and brought her back; and Euripides gives a scene in which the rough, jovial Hercules insists on the sorrowful Admetus marrying again a lady of his own choice, and gives the veiled Alcestis back to him as the new bride. Later Greeks tried to explain the story by saying that Alcestis nursed her husband through an infectious fever, caught it herself and had

been supposed to be dead, when a skillful physician restored her; but this is probably only one of the many reasonable versions they tried to give of the old tales that were founded on the decay and revival of nature in winter and spring, and with a presage running through them of sacrifice, death, and resurrection. Our own poet Chaucer was a great admirer of Alcestis, and improved upon the legend by turning her into his favorite flower—

> "The daisie or els the eye of the daie,
> The emprise and the floure of flouris all."

Another Greek legend told of the maiden of Thebes, one of the most self-devoted beings that could be conceived by a fancy untrained in the knowledge of Divine Perfection. It cannot be known how much of her story is true, but it was one that went deep into the hearts of Grecian men and women, and encouraged them in some of their best feelings; and assuredly the deeds imputed to her were golden.

Antigone was the daughter of the old King Œdipus of Thebes. After a time, heavy troubles, the consequence of the sins of his youth came upon him, and he was driven away from his kingdom, and sent to wander forth a blind old man, scorned and pointed at by all. Then it was that his faithful daughter showed true affection for him. She might have remained at Thebes with her brother Eteocles, who had been made king in her father's room, but she chose instead to wander forth with the

forlorn old man, fallen from his kingly state, and absolutely begging his bread. The great Athenian poet Sophocles began his tragedy of "Œdipus Coloneus" with showing the blind old king leaning upon Antigone's arm, and asking—

> "Tell me, thou daughter of a blind old man,
> Antigone, to what land are we come,
> Or to what city? Who the inhabitants
> Who with a slender pittance will relieve
> Even for a day the wandering Œdipus?"
>
> —Potter.

The place to which they had come was in Attica, near the city of Colonus. It was a lovely grove—

> "All the haunts of Attic ground,
> Where the matchless coursers bound,
> Boast not, through their realms of bliss,
> Other spot so fair as this.
> Frequent down this greenwood dale
> Mourns the warbling nightingale,
> Nestling 'mid the thickest screen
> Of the ivy's darksome green,
> Or where each empurpled shoot
> Drooping with its myriad fruit,
> Curl'd in many a mazy twine,
> Droops the never-trodden vine."
>
> —Anstice.

This beautiful grove was sacred to the Eumenides, or avenging goddesses, and it was therefore a sanctuary where no foot might tread; but near it the exiled king was allowed to take up his abode, and was protected by the great Athenian King, Theseus. There his other daughter, Ismene, joined him, and, after a time, his elder son, Polynices, arrived.

Polynices had been expelled from Thebes by his brother Eteocles, and had been wandering through Greece seeking aid to recover his rights. He had collected an army, and was come to take leave of his father and sisters; and at the same time to entreat his sisters to take care that, if he should fall in the battle, they would prevent his corpse from being left unburied; for the Greeks believed that till the funeral rites were performed, the spirit went wandering restlessly up and down upon the banks of a dark stream unable to enter the home of the dead. Antigone solemnly promised to him that he should not be left without these last rites. Before long, old Œdipus was killed by lightning, and the two sisters returned to Thebes.

The united armies of the seven chiefs against Thebes came on, led by Polynices. Eteocles sallied out to meet them, and there was a terrible battle, ending in all of the seven chiefs being slain, and the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, were killed by one another in single combat. Creon, the uncle, who thus became king, had always been on the side of Eteocles, and therefore commanded that, whilst this younger brother was entombed with all due solemnities, the body of the elder should be left upon the battle-field to be torn by dogs and vultures, and that whosoever durst bury it should be treated as a rebel and traitor to the state.

This was the time for the sister to remember her oath to her dead brother. The more

timid Ismene would have dissuaded her, but she answered,—

> "To me no sufferings have that hideous form
> Which can affright me from a glorious death."

And she crept forth by night, amid all the horrors of the deserted field of battle, and herself covered with loose earth the corpse of Polynices. The barbarous uncle caused it to be taken up and again exposed, and a watch was set at some little distance. Again Antigone

> "Was seen, lamenting shrill with plaintive notes,
> Like the poor bird that sees her lonely nest
> Spoil'd of her young."

Again she heaped dry dust with her own hands over the body, and poured forth the libations of wine that formed an essential part of the ceremony. She was seized by the guard, and led before Creon. She boldly avowed her deed, and, in spite of the supplications of Ismene, she was put to death, a sufferer for her noble and pious deeds; and with this only comfort:

> "Glowing at my heart
> I feel this hope, that to my father, dear
> And dear to thee, my mother, dear to thee,
> My brother, I shall go."
>
> —Potter.

Dim and doubtful indeed was the hope that upbore the grave and beautiful Theban maiden; and we shall see her resolution equaled, though hardly surpassed, by Christian Antigones of equal love and surer faith.

THE CUP OF WATER.

No touch in the history of the minstrel-king David gives us a more warm and personal feeling toward him than his longing for the water at the well of Bethlehem. Standing as the incident does in the summary of the characters of his mighty men, it is apt to appear to us as if it had taken place in his latter days; but such is not the case, it befell while he was still under thirty, in the time of his persecution by Saul.

It was when the last attempt at reconciliation with the king had been made, when the affectionate parting with the generous and faithful Jonathan had taken place, when Saul was hunting him like a partridge on the mountains on the one side, and the Philistines had nearly taken his life on the other, that David, outlawed, yet loyal at the heart, sent his aged parents to the land of Moab for refuge, and himself took up his abode in the caves of the wild limestone hills that had become familiar to him when he was a shepherd. Brave captain and Heaven-destined king as he was, his name attracted round him a motley group of those that were in distress, or in debt, or discontented, and among them were the "mighty men" whose brave deeds won them the fore-

most parts in that army with which David was to fulfill the ancient promises to his people. There were his three nephews, Joab, the ferocious and imperious, the chivalrous Abishai, and Asahel, the fleet of foot; there was the warlike Levite Benaiah, who slew lions and lionlike men, and others who, like David himself, had done battle with the gigantic sons of Anak. Yet even these valiant men, so wild and lawless, could be kept in check by the voice of their young captain; and, outlaws as they were, they spoiled no peaceful villages, they lifted not their hands against the persecuting monarch, and the neighboring farms lost not one lamb through their violence. Some at least listened to the song of their warlike minstrel:—

> "Come, ye children, and hearken to me,
> I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
> What man is he that lusteth to live,
> And would fain see good days?
> Let him refrain his tongue from evil
> And his lips that they speak no guile,
> Let him eschew evil and do good,
> Let him seek peace and ensue it."

With such strains as these, sung to his harp, the warrior gained the hearts of his men to enthusiastic love, and gathered followers on all sides, among them eleven fierce men of Gad, with faces like lions and feet swift as roes, who swam the Jordan in time of flood, and fought their way to him, putting all enemies in the valleys to flight.

But the Eastern sun burnt on the bare rocks. A huge fissure, opening in the mountain ridge,

encumbered at the bottom with broken rocks, with precipitous banks, scarcely affording a footing for the wild goats—such is the spot where, upon a cleft on the steep precipice, still remain the foundations of the "hold," or tower, believed to have been David's retreat, and near at hand is the low-browed entrance of the galleried cave, alternating between narrow passages and spacious halls, but all oppressively hot and close. Waste and wild, without a bush or a tree, in the feverish atmosphere of Palestine, it was a desolate region, and at length the wanderer's heart fainted in him, as he thought of his own home, with its rich and lovely terraced slopes, green with wheat, trellised with vines, and clouded with gray olive, and of the cool cisterns of living water by the gate of which he loved to sing—

"He shall feed me in a greeen pasture,
And lead me forth beside the waters of comfort."

His parched longing lips gave utterance to the sigh, "Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate?"

Three of his brave men, apparently Abishai, Benaiah, and Eleazar, heard the wish. Between their mountain fastness and the dearly-loved spring lay the host of the Philistines; but their love for their leader feared no enemies. It was not only water that he longed for, but the water from the fountain which he had loved in his childhood. They descended from their chasm, broke through the midst of the enemy's

army, and drew the water from the favorite spring, bearing it back, once again through the foe, to the tower upon the rock! Deeply moved was their chief at this act of self-devotion—so much moved that the water seemed to him too sacred to be put to his own use. "May God forbid it me that I should do this thing. Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy, for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it?" And as a hallowed and precious gift, he poured out unto the Lord the water obtained at the price of such peril to his followers.

In later times we meet with another hero who by his personal qualities inspired something of the same enthusiastic attachment as did David, and who met with an adventure somewhat similar, showing the like nobleness of mind on the part of both leader and followers.

It was Alexander of Macedon, whose character as a man, with all its dark shades of violence, rage, and profanity, has a nobleness and sweetness that win our hearts, while his greatness rests on a far broader basis than that of his conquests, though they are unrivaled. No one else so gained the love of the conquered, had such wide and comprehensive views for the amelioration of the world, or rose so superior to the prejudice of race; nor have any ten years left so lasting a trace upon the history of the world as those of his career.

It is not, however, of his victories that we are here to speak, but of his return march

from the banks of the Indus, in B. C. 326, when he had newly recovered from the severe wound which he had received under the fig-tree, within the mud wall of the city of the Malli. This expedition was as much the exploration of a discoverer as the journey of a conqueror; and, at the mouth of the Indus, he sent his ships to survey the coasts of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, while he himself marched along the shore of the province, then called Gedrosia, and now Mekhram. It was a most dismal tract. Above towered mountains of reddish-brown bare stone, treeless and without verdure, the scanty grass produced in the summer being burnt up long before September, the month of his march; and all the slope below was equally desolate slopes of gravel. The few inhabitants were called by the Greeks fish-eaters and turtle-eaters, because there was, apparently, nothing else to eat; and their huts were built of turtle-shells.

The recollections connected with the region were dismal. Semiramis and Cyrus were each said to have lost an army there through hunger and thirst; and these foes, the most fatal foes of the invader, began to attack the Greek host. Nothing but the discipline and all-pervading influence of Alexander could have borne his army through. Speed was their sole chance; and through the burning sun, over the arid rock, he stimulated their steps with his own high spirit of unshrinking endurance, till he had dragged them through one of

the most rapid and extraordinary marches of his wonderful career. His own share in their privations was fully and freely taken; and once when, like the rest, he was faint with heat and deadly thirst, a small quantity of water, won with great fatigue and difficulty, was brought to him, he esteemed it too precious to be applied to his own refreshment, but poured it forth as a libation, lest, he said, his warriors should thirst the more when they saw him drink alone; and, no doubt, too, because he felt the exceeding value of that which was purchased by loyal love.

A like story is told of Rodolf of Hapsburgh, the founder of the greatness of Austria, and one of the most open-hearted of men. A flagon of water was brought to him when his army was suffering from severe drought. "I can not," he said, "drink alone, nor can all share so small a quantity. I do not thirst for myself, but for my whole army."

Yet there have been thirsty lips that have made a still more trying renunciation. Our own Sir Philip Sidney, riding back, with the mortal hurt in his broken thigh, from the fight at Zutphen, and giving the draught from his own lips to the dying man whose necessities were greater than his own, has long been our proverb for the giver of that self-denying cup of water that shall by no means lose its reward.

A tradition of an act of somewhat the same character survived in a Slesvig family, now extinct. It was during the wars that raged

from 1652 to 1660, between Frederick III. of Denmark and Charles Gustavus of Sweden, that after a battle, in which the victory had remained with the Danes, a stout burgher of Flensborg was about to refresh himself, ere retiring to have his wounds dressed, with a draught of beer from a wooden bottle, when an imploring cry from a wounded Swede, lying on the field, made him turn and, with the very words of Sidney, "Thy need is greater than mine," he knelt down by the fallen enemy, to pour the liquor into his mouth. His requital was a pistol-shot in the shoulder from the treacherous Swede. "Rascal," he cried, "I would have befriended you, and you would murder me in return! Now will I punish you. I would have given you the whole bottle; but now you shall have only half." And drinking off half himself, he gave the rest to the Swede. The king, hearing the story, sent for the burgher, and asked him how he came to spare the life of such a rascal.

"Sire," said the honest burgher, "I could never kill a wounded enemy."

"Thou meritest to be a noble," the king said, and created him one immediately, giving him as armorial bearings a wooden bottle pierced with an arrow! The family only lately became extinct in the person of an old maiden lady.

HOW ONE MAN HAS SAVED A HOST.

B. C. 507.

There have been times when the devotion of one man has been the saving of an army. Such, according to old Roman story, was the feat of Horatius Cocles. It was in the year B. C. 507, not long after the kings had been expelled from Rome, when they were endeavoring to return by the aid of the Etruscans. Lars Porsena, one of the great Etruscan chieftains, had taken up the cause of the banished Tarquinius Superbus and his son Sextus, and gathered all his forces together, to advance upon the city of Rome. The great walls, of old Etrurian architecture, had probably already risen round the growing town, and all the people came flocking in from the country for shelter there; but the Tiber was the best defense, and it was only crossed by one wooden bridge, and the further side of that was guarded by a fort, called the Janiculum. But the vanguards of the overwhelming Etruscan army soon took the fort, and then, in the gallant words of Lord Macaulay's ballad,—

"Thus in all the Senate
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.

Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all,
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

"They held a council standing
Before the River Gate:
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spoke the Consul roundly,
'The bridge must straight go down,
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Nought else can save the town.'

"Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear;
'To arms! to arms! Sir Consul,
Lars Porsena is here.'
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

* * * * *

"But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
'Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down,
And if they once may win the bridge
What hope to save the town?'

"Then out spoke brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate,
'To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods?

"'And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast?
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame?

"'Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may,
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon straight path a thousand
May well be stopp'd by three;
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?'

"Then out spake Spurius Lartius,
A Ramnian proud was he,
'Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee.'
And out spake strong Herminius,
Of Titian blood was he,
'I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee.'"

So forth went these three brave men, Horatius, the Consul's nephew, Spurius Lartius, and Titus Herminius, to guard the bridge at the further end, while all the rest of the warriors were breaking down the timbers behind them.

"And Fathers, mixed with commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosen'd them below.

"Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,

Rank behind rank, like surge bright,
Of a broad sea of gold. Four
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread
Roll'd slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless three.

"The three stood calm and silent,
And look'd upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose."

They laughed to see three men standing to meet the whole army; but it was so narrow a space, that no more than three enemies could attack them at once, and it was not easy to match them. Foe after foe came forth against them, and went down before their swords and spears, till at last—

"Was none that would be foremost
To lead such dire attack!
But those behind cried 'Forward!'
And those before cried 'Back'!"

* * * * *

However, the supports of the bridge had been destroyed.

"But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied,
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
'Come back, come back, Horatius!'
Loud cried the Fathers all;
'Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruin fall!'

"Back-marted Spurius Lartius,
Herminius darted back:
And as they passed, beneath their feet,
They felt the timbers crack;
But when they turn'd their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have cross'd once more.

"But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosen'd beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream;
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam."

The one last champion, behind a rampart of dead enemies, remained till the destruction was complete.

"Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind,
Thrice thirty thousand foes before
And the broad flood behind."

A dart had put out one eye, he was wounded in the thigh, and his work was done. He turned round, and—

"Saw on Palatinus,
The white porch of his home,
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the walls of Rome:
'O Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms
Take thou in charge this day.' "

And with this brief prayer he leapt into the foaming stream. Polybius was told that he

was there drowned; but Livy gives the version which the ballad follows:—

"But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain,
And fast his blood was flowing,
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor,
And spent with changing blows,
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

"Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing-place.
But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bare bravely up his chin.

* * * * *

"And now he feels the bottom,
Now on dry earth he stands,
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands.
And now with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

"They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn to night.
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day,
To witness if I lie.

"It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see,
Horatius in his harness,

Halting upon his knee:
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old."

Never was more honorable surname than was his, of Cocles, or the one-eyed; and though his lameness prevented him from ever being a Consul, or leading an army, he was so much beloved and honored by his fellow-citizens, that in the time of a famine each Roman, to the number of 300,000, brought him a day's food, lest he should suffer want. The statue was shown even in the time of Pliny, 600 years afterwards, and was probably only destroyed when Rome was sacked by the barbarians.

Nor was the Roman bridge the only one that has been defended by one man against a host. In our own country, Stamford bridge was, in like manner, guarded by a single brave Northman, after the battle fought A. D. 1066, when Earl Tostig, the son of Godwin, had persuaded the gallant sea king, Harold Hardrada, to come and invade England. The chosen English king, Harold, had marched at full speed from Sussex to Yorkshire, and met the invaders marching at their ease, without expecting any enemy, and wearing no defensive armor, as they went forth to receive the keys of the city of York. The battle was fought by the Norsemen in the full certainty that it must be lost. The banner, "Land-waster," was planted in the midst; and the

king, chanting his last song, like the minstrel warrior he had always been, stood, with his bravest men, in a death-ring around it. There he died, and his choicest warriors with him; but many more fled back towards the ships, rushing over the few planks that were the only way across the river Ouse. And here stood their defender, alone upon the bridge, keeping back the whole pursuing English army, who could only attack him one at a time; until, with shame, be it spoken, he died by a cowardly blow from an enemy, who had crept down the bank of the river, and under the bridge, through the openings between the timbers of which he thrust up his spear, and thus was able to hurl the brave Northman into the river, mortally wounded, but not till great numbers of his countrymen had reached their ships, their lives saved by his gallantry.

In like manner, Robert Bruce, in the time of his wanderings, during the year 1306, saved his whole band by his sole exertions. He had been defeated by the forces of Edward I. at Methven, and had lost many of his friends. His little army went wandering among the hills, sometimes encamping in the woods, sometimes crossing the lakes in small boats. Many ladies were among them, and their summer life had some wild charms of romance; as the knightly huntsmen brought in the salmon, the roe, and the deer that formed their food, and the ladies gathered the flowering heather, over which soft skins were laid for their bedding. Sir James Douglas was the

most courtly and graceful knight of all the party, and ever kept them enlivened by his gay temper and ready wit; and the king himself cherished a few precious romances, which he used to read aloud to his followers as they rested in their mountain home.

But their bitter foe, the Lord of Lorn, was always in pursuit of them, and, near the head of the Tay, he came upon the small army of 300 men with 1,000 Highlanders, armed with Lochaber axes, at a place which is still called Dalry, or the King's Field. Many of the horses were killed by the axes; and James Douglas and Gilbert de la Haye were both wounded. All would have been slain or fallen into the hands of the enemy, if Robert Bruce had not sent them all on before him, up a narrow, steep path, and placed himself, with his armor and heavy horse, full in the path, protecting the retreat with his single arm. It was true, that so tall and powerful a man, sheathed in armor and on horseback, had a great advantage against the wild Highlanders, who only wore a shirt and a plaid, with a round target upon the arm; but they were lithe, active, light-footed men, able to climb like goats on the crags around him, and holding their lives as cheaply as he did.

Lorn, watching him from a distance, was struck with amazement, and exclaimed, "Methinks, Marthokson, he resembles Gol Mak Morn protecting his followers from Fingal;" thus comparing him to one of the most brilliant champions a Highland imagina-

tion could conceive. At last, three men, named M'Androsser, rushed forward, resolved to free their chief from this formidable enemy. There was a lake on one side, and a precipice on the other, and the king had hardly space to manage his horse, when all three sprang on him at once. One snatched his bridle, one caught him by the stirrup and leg, and a third leaped from a rising ground and seated himself behind him on his horse. The first lost his arm by one sweep of the king's sword; the second was overthrown and trampled on; and the last, by a desperate struggle, was dashed down, and his skull cleft by the king's sword; but his dying grasp was so tight upon the plaid, that Bruce was forced to unclasp the brooch that secured it, and leave both in the dead man's hold. It was long preserved by the Macdougals of Lorn, as a trophy of the narrow escape of their enemy.

Nor must we leave Robert the Bruce without mentioning that other Golden Deed, more truly noble because more full of mercy; namely, his halting his little army in full retreat in Ireland in the face of the English host under Roger Mortimer, that proper care and attendance might be given to one sick and suffering washerwoman and her new-born babe. Well may his old Scotch rhyming chronicler remark—

> "This was a full great courtesy
> That swilk a king and so mighty,
> Gert his men dwell on this manner,
> But for a poor lavender."

We have seen how the sturdy Roman fought for his city, the fierce Northman died to guard his comrades' rush to their ships after the lost battle, and how the mail-clad knightly Bruce periled himself to secure the retreat of his friends. Here is one more instance, from far more modern times of a soldier, whose willing sacrifice of his own life was the safety of a whole army. It was in the course of the long dismal conflict between Frederick the Great of Prussia and Maria Theresa of Austria, which was called the Seven Years War. Louis XV. of France had taken the part of Austria, and had sent an army into Germany in the autumn of 1760. From this the Marquis de Castries had been dispatched, with 25,000 men, towards Rheinberg, and had taken up a strong position at Klostercamp. On the night of the 15th of October, a young officer, called the Chevalier d'Assas, of the Auvergne regiment, was sent out to reconnoiter, and advanced alone into a wood, at some little distance from his men.

Suddenly he found himself surrounded by a number of soldiers, whose bayonets pricked his breast, and a voice whispered in his ear, "Make the slightest noise, and you are a dead man!" In one moment he understood it all. The enemy were advancing, to surprise the French army, and would be upon them when night was farther advanced. That moment decided his fate. He shouted, as loud as his voice would carry the words, "Here, Auvergne! Here are the enemy!" By the time the cry reached the ears of his men, their

captain was a senseless corpse; but his death had saved the army; the surprise had failed, and the enemy retreated.

Louis XV. was too mean-spirited and selfish to feel the beauty of this brave action; but when, fourteen years later, Louis XVI. came to the throne, he decreed that a pension should be given to the family as long as a male representative remained to bear the name of D'Assas. Poor Louis XVI. had not long the control of the treasure of France; but a century of changes, wars, and revolutions has not blotted out the memory of the self-devotion of the chevalier; for, among the new war steamers of the French fleet there is one that bears the ever-honored name of D'Assas.

THE PASS OF THERMOPYLÆ.

B. C. 430.

There was trembling in Greece. "The Great King," as the Greeks called the chief potentate of the East, whose domains stretched from the Indian Caucasus to the Ægeus, from the Caspian to the Red Sea, was marshalling his forces against the little free states that nestled amid the rocks and gulfs of the Eastern Mediterranean. Already had his might devoured the cherished colonies of the Greeks on the eastern shore of the Archipelago, and every traitor to home institutions found a ready asylum at that despotic court, and tried to revenge his own wrongs by whispering incitements to invasion. "All people, nations, and languages," was the commencement of the decrees of that monarch's court; and it was scarcely a vain boast, for his satraps ruled over subject kingdoms, and among his tributary nations he counted the Chaldean, with his learning and old civilization, the wise and steadfast Jew, the skillful Phœnician, the learned Egyptian, the wild freebooting Arab of the desert, the dark-skinned Ethiopian, and over all these ruled the keen witted, active native Persian race, the conquerors of all the rest, and led by a chosen band proudly called

the Immortal. His many capitals—Babylon the great, Susa, Persepolis, and the like—were names of dreamy splendor to the Greeks, described now and then by Ionians from Asia Minor who had carried their tribute to the King's own feet, or by courtier slaves who had escaped with difficulty from being all too serviceable at the tyrannic court. And the lord of this enormous empire was about to launch his countless host against the little cluster of states, the whole of which together would hardly equal one province of the huge Asiatic realm! Moreover, it was a war not only on the men but on their gods. The Persians were zealous adorers of the sun and of fire, they abhorred the idol-worship of the Greeks, and defiled and plundered every temple that fell in their way. Death and desolation were almost the best that could be looked for at such hands—slavery and torture from cruelly barbarous masters would only too surely be the lot of numbers, should their land fall a prey to the conquerors.

True it was that ten years back the former Great King had sent his best troops to be signally defeated upon the coast of Attica; but the losses at Marathon had but stimulated the Persian lust of conquest, and the new King Xerxes was gathering together such myriads of men as should crush down the Greeks and overrun their country by mere force of numbers.

The muster place was at Sardis, and there Greek spies had seen the multitudes assem-

bling and the state and magnificence of the king's attendants. Envoys had come from him to demand earth and water from each state in Greece, as emblems that land and sea were his, but each state was resolved to be free, and only Thessaly, that which lay first in his path, consented to yield the token of subjugation.

A council was held at the Isthmus of Corinth, and attended by deputies from all the states of Greece to consider of the best means of defense. The ships of the enemy would coast round the shores of the Ægean Sea, the land army would cross the Hellespont on a bridge of boats lashed together, and march southward into Greece. The only hope of averting the danger lay in defending such passages as, from the nature of the ground, were so narrow that only a few persons could fight hand to hand at once, so that courage would be of more avail than numbers.

The first of these passes was called Tempe, and a body of troops was sent to guard it; but they found that this was useless and impossible, and came back again. The next was at Thermopylæ. Look in your map of the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea, as it was then called, for the great island of Negropont, or by its old name, Eubœa. It looks like a piece broken off from the coast, and to the north is shaped like the head of a bird, with the beak running into a gulf, that would fit over it, upon the main land, and between the island and the coast is an exceedingly narrow strait. The Persian army would have to march round the

edge of the gulf. They could not cut straight across the country, because the ridge of mountains called Œta rose up and barred their way. Indeed, the woods, rocks, and precipices came down so near the sea-shore, that in two places there was only room for one single wheel track between the steeps and the impassable morass that formed the border of the gulf on its south side. These two very narrow places were called the gates of the pass, and were about a mile apart. There was a little more width left in the intervening space; but in this there were a number of springs of warm mineral water, salt and sulphurous, which were used for the sick to bathe in, and thus the place was called Thermopylæ, or the Hot Gates. A wall had once been built across the westernmost of these narrow places, when the Thessalians and Phocians, who lived on either side of it, had been at war with one another; but it had been allowed to go to decay, since the Phocians had found out that there was a very steep narrow mountain path along the bed of a torrent, by which it was possible to cross from one territory to the other without going round this marshy coast road.

This was, therefore, an excellent place to defend. The Greek ships were all drawn up on the further side of Eubœa to prevent the Persian vessels from getting into the strait and landing men beyond the pass, and a division of the army was sent off to guard the Hot Gates. The council at the Isthmus did not know of the mountain pathway, and thought that all would

be safe as long as the Persians were kept out of the coast path.

The troops sent for this purpose were from different cities, and amounted to about 4,000 who were to keep the pass against two millions. The leader of them was Leonidas, who had newly become one of the two kings of Sparta, the city that above all in Greece trained its sons to be hardy soldiers, dreading death infinitely less than shame. Leonidas had already made up his mind that the expedition would probably be his death, perhaps because a prophecy had been given at the Temple at Delphi that Sparta should be saved by the death of one of her kings of the race of Hercules. He was allowed by law to take with him 300 men, and these he chose most carefully, not merely for their strength and courage, but selecting those who had sons, so that no family might be altogether destroyed. These Spartans, with their helots or slaves, made up his own share of the numbers, but all the army was under his generalship. It is even said that the 300 celebrated their own funeral rites before they set out lest they should be deprived of them by the enemy, since, as we have already seen, it was the Greek belief that the spirits of the dead found no rest till their obsequies had been performed. Such preparations did not daunt the spirits of Leonidas and his men, and his wife, Gorgo, was not a woman to be faint-hearted or hold him back. Long before, when she was a very little girl, a word of hers had saved her father from lis-

tening to a traitorous message from the King of Persia; and every Spartan lady was bred up to be able to say to those she best loved that they must come home from battle "with the shield or on it"—either carrying it victoriously or borne upon it as a corpse.

When Leonidas came to Thermopylæ, the Phocians told him of the mountain path through the chestnut woods of Mount Œta, and begged to have the privilege of guarding it on a spot high up on the mountain side, assuring him that it was very hard to find at the other end, and that there was every probability that the enemy would never discover it. He consented, and encamping around the warm springs, caused the broken wall to be repaired, and made ready to meet the foe.

The Persian army were seen covering the whole country like locusts, and the hearts of some of the southern Greeks in the pass began to sink. Their homes in the Peloponnesus were comparatively secure—had they not better fall back and reserve themselves to defend the Isthmus of Corinth? But Leonidas, though Sparta was safe below the Isthmus, had no intention of abandoning his northern allies, and kept the other Peloponnesians to their posts, only sending messengers for further help.

Presently a Persian on horseback rode up to reconnoiter the pass. He could not see over the wall, but in front of it and on the ramparts, he saw the Spartans, some of them engaged in active sports, and others in combing

their long hair. He rode back to the king, and told him what he had seen. Now, Xerxes had in his camp an exiled Spartan Prince, named Demaratus, who had become a traitor to his country, and was serving as counselor to the enemy. Xerxes sent for him, and asked whether his countrymen were mad to be thus employed instead of fleeing away; but Demaratus made answer that a hard fight was no doubt in preparation, and that it was the custom of the Spartans to array their hair with especial care when they were about to enter upon any great peril. Xerxes would, however, not believe that so petty a force could intend to resist him, and waited four days, probably expecting his fleet to assist him, but as it did not appear, the attack was made.

The Greeks, stronger men and more heavily armed, were far better able to fight to advantage than the Persians with their short spears and wicker shields, and beat them off with great ease. It is said that Xerxes three times leapt off his throne in despair at the sight of his troops being driven backwards; and thus for two days it seemed as easy to force a way through the Spartans as through the rocks themselves. Nay, how could slavish troops, dragged from home to spread the victories of an ambitious king, fight like freemen who felt that their strokes were to defend their homes and children?

But on that evening a wretched man, named Ephialtes, crept into the Persian camp, and offered, for a great sum of money, to show the

mountain path that would enable the enemy to take the brave defenders in the rear! A Persian general, named Hydarnes, was sent off at nightfall with a detachment to secure this passage, and was guided through the thick forests that clothed the hillside. In the stillness of the air, at daybreak, the Phocian guards of the path were startled by the crackling of the chestnut leaves under the tread of many feet. They started up, but a shower of arrows was discharged on them, and forgetting all save the present alarm, they fled to a higher part of the mountain, and the enemy, without waiting to pursue them, began to descend.

As day dawned, morning light showed the watchers of the Grecian camp below a glittering and shimmering in the torrent bed where the shaggy forests opened; but it was not the sparkle of water, but the shine of gilded helmets and the gleaming of silvered spears? Moreover, a Cimmerian crept over to the wall from the Persian camp with tidings that the path had been betrayed, that the enemy were climbing it, and would come down beyond the Eastern Gate. Still, the way was rugged and circuitous, the Persians would hardly descend before midday, and there was ample time for the Greeks to escape before they could thus be shut in by the enemy.

There was a short council held over the morning sacrifice. Megistias, the seer, on inspecting the entrails of the slain victim, declared, as well he might, that their appearance

boded disaster. Him Leonidas ordered to retire, but he refused, though he sent home his only son. There was no disgrace to an ordinary tone of mind in leaving a post that could not be held, and Leonidas recommended all the allied troops under his command to march away while yet the way was open. As to himself and his Spartans, they had made up their minds to die at their post, and there could be no doubt that the example of such a resolution would do more to save Greece than their best efforts could ever do if they were careful to reserve themselves for another occasion.

All the allies consented to retreat, except the eighty men who came from Mycæne and the 700 Thespians, who declared that they would not desert Leonidas. There were also 400 Thebans who remained; and thus the whole number that stayed with Leonidas to confront two million of enemies were fourteen hundred warriors, besides the helots or attendants on the 300 Spartans, whose number is not known, but there was probably at least one to each. Leonidas had two kinsmen in the camp, like himself, claiming the blood of Hercules, and he tried to save them by giving them letters and messages to Sparta; but one answered that "he had come to fight, not to carry letters;" and the other, that "his deeds would tell all that Sparta wished to know." Another Spartan, named Dienices, when told that the enemy's archers were so numerous that their arrows darkened the sun, replied, "So much the better, we shall fight in the

shade." Two of the 300 had been sent to a neighboring village, suffering severely from a complaint in the eyes. One of them, called Eurytus, put on his armor, and commanded his helot to lead him to his place in the ranks, the other, called Aristodemus, was so overpowered with illness that he allowed himself to be carried away with the retreating allies. It was still early in the day when all were gone, and Leonidas gave the word to his men to take their last meal. "To-night," he said "we shall sup with Pluto."

Hitherto, he had stood on the defensive, and had husbanded the lives of his men; but he now desired to make as great a slaughter as possible, so as to inspire the enemy with dread of the Grecian name. He therefore marched out beyond the wall, without waiting to be attacked, and the battle began. The Persian captains went behind their wretched troops and scourged them on to the fight with whips! Poor wretches, they were driven on to be slaughtered, pierced with the Greek spears, hurled into the sea, or trampled into the mud of the morass; but their inexhaustible numbers told at length. The spears of the Greeks broke under hard service, and their swords alone remained; they began to fall, and Leonidas himself was among the first of the slain. Hotter than ever was the fight over his corpse, and two Persian princes, brothers of Xerxes, were there killed; but at length word was brought that Hydarnes was over the pass, and that the few remaining men were thus en-

closed on all sides. The Spartans and Thespians made their way to a little hillock within the wall, resolved to let this be the place of their last stand; but the hearts of the Thebans failed them, and they came toward the Persians holding out their hands in entreaty for mercy. Quarter was given to them, but they were all branded with the king's mark as untrustworthy deserters. The helots probably at this time escaped into the mountains; while the small desperate band stood side by side on the hill still fighting to the last, some with swords, others with daggers, others even with their hands and teeth, till not one living man remained amongst them when the sun went down. There was only a mound of slain, bristled over with arrows.

Twenty thousand Persians had died before that handful of men! Xerxes asked Demaratus if there were many more at Sparta like these, and was told there were 8,000. It must have been with a somewhat failing heart that he invited his courtiers from the fleet to see what he had done to the men who dared to oppose him! and showed them the head and arm of Leonidas set up upon a cross; but he took care that all his own slain, except 1,000, should first be put out of sight. The body of the brave king was buried where he fell, as were those of the other dead. Much envied were they by the unhappy Aristodemus, who found himself called by no name but the "Coward," and was shunned by all his fellow-citizens. No one would give him fire or water,

and after a year of misery, he redeemed his honor by perishing in the fore-front of the battle of Platæa, which was the last blow that drove the Persians ingloriously from Greece.

The Greeks then united in doing honor to the brave warriors who, had they been better supported, might have saved the whole country from invasion. The poet Simonides wrote the inscriptions that were engraved upon the pillars that were set up in the pass to commemorate this great action. One was outside the wall, where most of the fighting had been. It seems to have been in honor of the whole number who had for two days resisted—

"Here did four thousand men from Pelops' land
Against three hundred myriads bravely stand."

In honor of the Spartans was another column—

"Go, traveler, to Sparta tell
That here, obeying her, we fell."

On the little hillock of the last resistance was placed the figure of a stone lion, in memory of Leonidas, so fitly named the lion-like, and Simonides, at his own expense, erected a pillar to his friend, the seer Megistias—

"The great Megistias' tomb you here may view,
Who slew the Medes, fresh from Spercheius fords;
Well the wise seer the coming death foreknew,
Yet scorn'd he to forsake his Spartan lords."

The names of the 300 were likewise engraven on a pillar at Sparta.

Lion, pillars and inscriptions have all long

since passed away, even the very spot itself has changed; new soil has been formed, and there are miles of solid ground between Mount Æta and the gulf, so that the Hot Gates no longer exist. But more enduring than stone or brass—nay, than the very battle-field itself—has been the name of Leonidas. Two thousand three hundred years have sped since he braced himself to perish for his country's sake in that narrow, marshy coast road, under the brow of the wooded crags, with the sea by his side. Since that time how many hearts have glowed, how many arms have been nerved at the remembrance of the Pass of Thermopylæ, and the defeat that was worth so much more than a victory!

THE ROCK OF THE CAPITOL.

B. C. 389.

The city of Rome was gradually rising on the banks of the Tiber, and every year was adding to its temples and public buildings.

Every citizen loved his city and her greatness above all else. There was as yet little wealth among them; the richest owned little more than a few acres, which they cultivated themselves by the help of their families, and sometimes of a few slaves, and the beautiful Campagna di Roma, girt in by hills looking like amethysts in the distance, had not then become almost uninhabitable from pestilential air, but was rich and fertile, full of highly cultivated small farms, where corn was raised in furrows made by a small hand plough, and herds of sheep, goats, and oxen browsed in the pasture lands. The owners of these lands would on public days take off their rude working dress and broad-brimmed straw hat, and putting on the white toga with a purple hem, would enter the city, and go to the valley called the Forum or Market-place to give their votes for the officers of state who were elected every year; especially the two consuls, who were like kings all but the crown, wore purpled togas richly embroidered, sat on ivory chairs,

and were followed by lictors carrying an ax in a bundle of rods for the execution of justice.

In their own chamber sat the Senate, the great council composed of the patricians, or citizens of highest birth, and of those who had formerly been consuls. They decided on peace or war, and made the laws, and were the real governors of the State, and their grave dignity made a great impression on all who came near them. Above the buildings of the city rose steep and high the Capitoline Hill, with the Temple of Jupiter on its summit, and the strong wall in which was the chief stronghold and citadel of Rome, the Capitol, the very center of her strength and resolution. When a war was decided on, every citizen capable of bearing arms was called into the Forum, bringing his helmet, breast-plate, short-sword and heavy spear, and the officers, called tribunes, chose out a sufficient number, who were formed into bodies called legions, and marched to battle under the command of one of the consuls. Many little States or Italian tribes, who had nearly the same customs as Rome, surrounded the Campagna, and so many disputes arose, that every year, as soon as the crops were saved, the armies marched out, the flocks were driven to folds on the hills, the women and children were placed in the walled cities, and a battle was fought, sometimes followed up by the siege of the city of the defeated. The Romans did not always obtain the victory, but there was a stanchness about them that was sure to prevail in the long run;

if beaten one year, they came back to the charge the next, and thus they gradually mastered one of their neighbors after another, and spread their dominion over the central part of Italy.

They were well used to Italian and Etruscan ways of making war, but after nearly 400 years of this kind of fighting, a stranger and wilder enemy came upon them. These were the Gauls, a tall, strong, brave people, long-limbed and red-haired, of the same race as the Highlanders of Scotland. They had gradually spread themselves over the middle of Europe, and had for some generations past lived among the Alpine mountains, whence they used to come down upon the rich plains of northern Italy for forays, in which they slew and burnt, and drove off cattle, and now and then, when a country was quite depopulated, would settle themselves in it. And thus, the Gauls conquering from the north and the Romans from the south, these two fierce nations at length came against one another.

The old Roman story is that it happened thus: The Gauls had an unusually able leader, whom Latin historians call Brennus, but whose real name was most likely Bran, and who is said to have come out of Britain. He had brought a great host of Gauls to attack Clusium, a Tuscan city, and the inhabitants sent to Rome to entreat succor. Three ambassadors, brothers of the noble old family of Fabius, were sent from Rome to intercede for the Clusians. They asked Brennus what harm

the men of Clusium had done the Gauls, that they thus made war on them, and, according to Plutarch's account, Brennus made answer that the injury was that the Clusians possessed land that the Gauls wanted, remarking, that it was exactly the way in which the Romans themselves treated their neighbors, adding, however, that this was neither cruel nor unjust, but according—

> "To the good old plan
> That they should take who have the power.
> And they should keep who can."*

The Fabii, on receiving this answer, were so foolish as to transgress the rule, owned even by the savage Gauls, that an ambassador should neither fight nor be fought with; they joined the Clusians, and one brother, named Quintus, killed a remarkably large and tall Gallic chief in single combat. Brennus was justly enraged, and sent messengers to Rome to demand that the brothers should be given up to him for punishment. The priests and many of the Senate held that the rash young men had deserved death as covenant-breakers; but their father made strong interest for them, and prevailed not only to have them spared, but even chosen as tribunes to lead the legions in the war that was expected.† Thus he per-

*These lines of Wordsworth on Rob Roy's grave almost literally translate the speech Plutarch gives the first Kelt of history, Brennus.

† These events happened during an experiment made by the Romans of having six military tribunes instead of two consuls.

suaded the whole nation to take on itself the guilt of his sons, a want of true self-devotion uncommon among the old Romans, and which was severely punished.

The Gauls were much enraged, and hurried southwards, not waiting for plunder by the way, but declaring that they were friends to every State save Rome. The Romans on their side collected their troops in haste, but with a lurking sense of having transgressed; and since they had gainsaid the counsel of their priests, they durst not have recourse to the sacrifices and ceremonies by which they usually sought to gain the favor of their gods. Even among heathens, the saying has often been verified, "a sinful heart makes failing hand," and the battle on the banks of the river Allia, about eleven miles from Rome, was not so much a fight as a rout. The Roman soldiers were ill drawn up, and were at once broken. Some fled to Veii and other towns, many were drowned in crossing the Tiber, and it was but a few who showed in Rome their shame-stricken faces, and brought word that the Gauls were upon them.

Had the Gauls been really in pursuit, the Roman name and nation would have perished under their swords; but they spent three days in feasting and sharing their plunder, and thus gave the Romans time to take measures for the safety of such as could yet escape. There seems to have been no notion of defending the city, the soldiers had been too much dispersed; but all who still remained and

could call up something of their ordinary courage, carried all the provisions they could collect into the stronghold of the Capitol, and resolved to hold out there till the last, in hopes that the scattered army might muster again, or that the Gauls might retreat, after having revenged themselves on the city. Every one who could not fight, took flight, taking with them all they could carry, and among them went the white-clad troop of vestal virgins, carrying with them their censer of fire, which was esteemed sacred, and never allowed to be extinguished. A man named Albinus, who saw these sacred women footsore, weary, and weighed down with the treasures of their temple, removed his own family and goods from his cart and seated tnem in it—an act of reverence for which he was much esteemed—and thus they safely reached the city of Cumæ. The only persons left in Rome outside the Capitol were eighty of the oldest senators and some of the priests. Some were too feeble to fly, and would not come into the Capitol to consume the food that might maintain fighting men; but most of them were filled with a deep, solemn thought that, by offering themselves to the weapons of the barbarians, they might atone for the sin sanctioned by the Republic, and that their death might be the saving of the nation. This notion that the death of a ruler would expiate a country's guilt, was one of the strange presages abroad in the heathen world of that which alone takes away the sin of all mankind.

On came the Gauls at last. The gates stood open, the streets were silent, the houses' low-browed doors showed no one in the paved courts. No living man was to be seen, till at last hurrying down the steep empty streets, they reached the great open space of the Forum, and there they stood still in amazement, for ranged along a gallery were a row of ivory chairs, and in each chair sat the figure of a white-haired, white-bearded man, with arms and legs bare, and robes either of snowy white, white bordered with purple, or purple richly embroidered, ivory staves in their hands, and majestic, unmoved countenances. So motionless were they, that the Gauls stood still, not knowing whether they beheld men or statues. A wondrous scene it must have been, as the brawny, red-haired Gauls, with freckled visage, keen little eyes, long broad sword, and wide plaid garment, fashioned into loose trousers, came curiously down into the market-place, one after another; and each stood silent and transfixed at the spectacle of those grand figures, still unmoving, save that their large full liquid dark eyes showed them to be living beings. Surely these Gauls deemed themselves in the presence of that council of kings who were sometimes supposed to govern Rome, nay, if they were not before the gods themselves. At last, one Gaul, ruder, or more curious than the rest, came up to one of the venerable figures, and, to make proof whether he were flesh and blood, stroked his beard. Such an insult from an uncouth barbarian

was more than Roman blood could brook, and the Gaul soon had his doubt satisfied by a sharp blow on the head from the ivory staff All reverence was dispelled by that stroke; it was at once returned by a death thrust, and the fury of the savages wakening in proportion to the awe that had at first struck them, they rushed on the old senators, and slew each one in his curule chair.

Then they dispersed through the city, burning, plundering, and destroying. To take the Capitol they soon found to be beyond their power, but they hoped to starve the defenders out; and in the meantime they spent their time in pulling down the outer walls, and such houses and temples as had resisted the fire, till the defenders of the Capitol looked down from their height on nothing but desolate black burnt ground, with a few heaps of ruins in the midst, and the barbarians roaming about in it, and driving in the cattle that their foraging parties collected from the country round. There was much earnest faith in their own religion among the Romans; they took all this ruin as the just reward of their shelter of the Fabii, and even in their extremity were resolved not to transgress any sacred rule. Though food daily became more scarce and starvation was fast approaching, not one of the sacred geese that were kept in Juno's Temple was touched; and one Fabius Dorso, who believed that the household gods of his family required yearly a sacrifice on their own festival day on the Quirinal Hill, arrayed himself

in the white robes of a sacrificer, took his sacred images in his arms, and went out of the Capitol, through the midst of the enemy, through the ruins to the accustomed altar, and there performed the regular rites. The Gauls, seeing that it was a religious ceremony, let him pass through them untouched, and he returned in safety; but Brennus was resolved on completing his conquest, and while half his forces went out to plunder, he remained with the other half, watching the moment to effect an entrance into the Capitol; and how were the defenders, worn out with hunger, to resist without relief from without? And who was there to bring relief to them, who were themselves the Roman State and government?

Now there was a citizen, named Marcus Furius Camillus, who was, without question, at that time, the first soldier of Rome, and had taken several of the chief Italian cities, especially that of Veii, which had long been a most dangerous enemy. But he was a proud, haughty man, and had brought on himself much dislike; until, at last, a false accusation was brought against him, that he had taken an unfair share of the plunder of Veii. He was too proud to stand a trial; and, leaving the city, was immediately fined a considerable sum. He had taken up his abode at the city of Ardea, and was there living when the plundering half of Brennus' army was reported to be coming thither. Camillus immediately offered the magistrates to undertake their defense; and getting together all the men who

could bear arms, he led them out, fell upon the Gauls as they all lay asleep and unguarded in the dead of night, made a great slaughter of them, and saved Ardea. All this was heard by the many Romans who had been living dispersed since the rout of Allia; and they began to recover heart and spirit, and to think that if Camillus would be their leader, they might yet do something to redeem the honor of Rome, and save their friends in the Capitol. An entreaty was sent to him to take the command of them; but, like a proud, stern man as he was, he made answer, that he was a mere exile, and could not take upon himself to lead Romans without a decree from the Senate giving him authority. The Senate was—all that remained of it—shut up in the Capitol; the Gauls were spread all round; how was that decree to be obtained?

A young man, named Pontius Cominius, undertook the desperate mission. He put on a peasant dress, and hid some corks under it, supposing that he should find no passage by the bridge over the Tiber. Traveling all day on foot, he came at night to the bank, and saw the guard at the bridge; then, having waited for darkness, he rolled his one thin light garment, with the corks wrapped up in it round his head, and trusted himself to the stream of Father Tiber, like "good Horatius" before him; and he was safely borne along to the foot of the Capitoline Hill. He crept along, avoiding every place where he saw light or heard noise, till he came to a rugged precipice,

which he suspected would not be watched by the enemy, who would suppose it too steep to be climbed from above or below. But the resolute man did not fear the giddy, dangerous ascent, even in the darkness; he swung himself up by the stems and boughs of vines and climbing plants, his naked feet clung to the rocks and tufts of grass, and at length he stood on the top of the rampart, calling out his name to the soldiers who came in haste around him, not knowing whether he were friend or foe. A joyful sound must his Latin speech have been to the long-tried, half-starved garrison, who had not seen a fresh face for six long months! The few who represented the Senate and people of Rome were hastily awakened from their sleep, and gathered together to hear the tidings brought them at so much risk. Pontius told them of the victory of Ardea, and that Camillus and the Romans collected at Veii were only waiting to march to their succor till they should give him lawful power to take the command. There was little debate. The vote was passed at once to make Camillus Dictator, an office to which Romans were elected upon great emergencies, and which gave them, for the time, absolute kingly control; and then Pontius, bearing the appointment, set off once again upon his mission, still under shelter of night, clambered down the rock, and crossed the Gallic camp before the barbarians were yet awake.

There was hope in the little garrison; but danger was not over. The sharp-eyed Gauls

observed that the shrubs and creepers were broken, the moss frayed, and fresh stones and earth rolled down at the crag of the Capitol; they were sure that the rock had been climbed, and, therefore, that it might be climbed again. Should they, who were used to the snowy peaks, dark abysses, and huge glaciers of the Alps, be afraid to climb where a soft dweller in a tame Italian town could venture a passage? Brennus chose out the hardiest of his mountaineers, and directed them to climb up in the dead of night, one by one, in perfect silence, and thus to surprise the Romans, and complete the slaughter and victory, before the forces assembling at Veii could come to their rescue.

Silently the Gauls climbed, so stilly that not even a dog heard them; and the sentinel nearest to the post, who had fallen into a dead sleep of exhaustion from hunger, never awoke. But the fatal stillness was suddenly broken by loud gabbling, cackling, and flapping of heavy wings. The sacred geese of Juno, which had been so religiously spared in the famine, were frightened by the rustling beneath, and proclaimed their terror in their own noisy fashion. The first to take the alarm was Marcus Manlius, who started forward just in time to meet the foremost climbers as they set foot on the rampart. One, who raised an axe to strike, lost his arm by one stroke of Manlius' short Roman sword; the next was by main strength hurled backwards over the precipice, and Manlius stood alone on the top, for a few

moments, ready to strike the next who should struggle up. The whole of the garrison were in a few moments on the alert, and the attack was entirely repulsed; the sleeping sentry was cast headlong down the rock; and Manlius was brought, by each grateful soldier, that which was then most valuable to all, a little meal and a small measure of wine. Still, the condition of the Capitol was lamentable; there was no certainty that Pontius had ever reached Camillus in safety; and, indeed, the discovery of his path by the enemy would rather have led to the supposition that he had been seized and detected. The best hope lay in wearying out the besiegers; and there seemed to be more chance of this, since the Gauls often could be seen from the heights, burying the corpses of their dead; their tall, bony forms looked gaunt and drooping, and, here and there, unburied carcasses lay amongst the ruins. Nor were the flocks and herds any longer driven in from the country. Either all must have been exhausted, or else Camillus and his friends must be near, and preventing their raids. At any rate, it appeared as if the enemy was quite as ill off as to provisions as the garrison, and in worse condition as to health. In effect, this was the first example of the famous saying, that Rome destroys her conquerors. In this state of things one of the Romans had a dream that Jupiter, the special god of the Capitol, appeared to him, and gave the strange advice that all the remaining flour should be baked and the loaves thrown down

into the enemy's camp. Telling the dream, which may, perhaps, have been the shaping of his own thoughts, that this apparent waste would persuade the barbarians that the garrison could not soon be starved out, this person obtained the consent of the rest of the besieged. Some approved the stratagem, and no one chose to act contrary to Jupiter's supposed advice; so the bread was baked, and tossed down by the hungry men.

After a time, there was a report from the outer guards that the Gallic watch had been telling them that their leader would be willing to speak with some of the Roman chiefs. Accordingly, Sulpitius, one of the tribunes, went out, and had a conference with Brennus, who declared that he would depart, provided the Romans would lay down a ransom, for their Capitol and their own lives, of a thousand pounds' weight of gold. To this Sulpitius agreed, and, returning to the Capitol, the gold was collected from the treasury, and carried down to meet the Gauls, who brought their own weights. The weights did not meet the amount of gold ornaments that had been contributed for the purpose, and no doubt the Gauls were resolved to have all that they beheld; for when Sulpitius was about to try to arrange the balance, Brennus insultingly threw his sword into his own scale, exclaiming, Væ Victis! "Woe to the conquered!" The Roman was not yet fallen so low as not to remonstrate, and the dispute was waxing sharp, when there was a confused outcry in

the Gallic camp, a shout from the heights of the Capitol, and into the midst of the open space rode a band of Roman patricians and knights in armor, with the Dictator Camillus at their head.

He no sooner saw what was passing, than he commanded the treasure to be taken back, and, turning to Brennus, said, "It is with iron, not gold, that Romans guard their country."

Brennus declared that the treaty had been sworn to, and that it would be a breach of faith to deprive him of the ransom; to which Camillus replied, that he himself was Dictator, and no one had the power to make a treaty in his absence. The dispute was so hot, that they drew their swords against one another, and there was a skirmish among the ruins; but the Gauls soon fell back and retreated to their camp, when they saw the main body of Camillus' army marching upon them. It was no less than 40,000 in number; and Brennus knew he could not withstand them with his broken, sickly army. He drew off early the next morning, but was followed by Camillus, and routed, with great slaughter, about eight miles from Rome; and very few of the Gauls lived to return home, for those who were not slain in battle were cut off in their flight by the country people, whom they had plundered.

In reward for their conduct on this occasion, Camillus was termed Romulus, Father of his Country, and Second Founder of Rome;

Marcus Manlius received the honorable surname of Capitolinus; and even the geese were honored by having a golden image raised to their honor in Juno's temple, and a live goose was yearly carried in triumph, upon a soft litter, in a golden cage, as long as any heathen festivals lasted. The reward of Pontius Cominius does not appear; but surely he, and the old senators who died for their country's sake, deserve to be forever remembered for their brave contempt of life when a service could be done to the State.

The truth of the whole narrative is greatly doubted, and it is suspected that the Gallic conquest was more complete than the Romans ever chose to avow. Their history is far from clear up to this very epoch, when it is said that all their records were destroyed, but even when place and period are misty, great names and the main outline of their actions boom through the cloud, perhaps exaggerated, but still with some reality; and if the magnificent romance of the sack of Rome be not fact, yet it is certainly history, and well worthy of note and remembrance, as one of the finest extant traditions of a whole chain of Golden Deeds.

THE TWO FRIENDS OF SYRACUSE.

B. C. 380 (CIRCA).

Most of the best and noblest of the Greeks held what was called the Pythagorean philosophy. This was one of the many systems framed by the great men of heathenism, when by the feeble light of nature they were, as St. Paul says, "seeking after God, if haply they might feel after Him," like men groping in the darkness. Pythagoras lived before the time of history, and almost nothing is known about him, though his teaching and his name were never lost. There is a belief that he had traveled in the East, and in Egypt, and as he lived about the time of the dispersion of the Israelites, it is possible that some of his purest and best teaching might have been crumbs gathered from their fuller instruction through the Law and the Prophets. One thing is plain, that even in dealing with heathenism the Divine rule holds good, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Golden Deeds are only to be found among men whose belief is earnest and sincere, and in something really high and noble. Where there was nothing worshiped but savage or impure power, and the very form of adoration was cruel and unclean, as among the Canaanites and Carthaginians,

there we find no true self-devotion. The great deeds of the heathen world were all done by early Greeks and Romans before yet the last gleams of purer light had faded out of their beliefs, and while their moral sense still nerved them to energy; or else by such later Greeks as had embraced the deeper and more earnest yearnings of the minds that had become a "law unto themselves."

The Pythagoreans were bound together in a brotherhood, the members of which had rules that are now not understood, but which linked them so as to form a sort of club, with common religious observances and pursuits of science, especially mathematics and music. And they were taught to restrain their passions, especially that of anger, and to endure with patience all kinds of suffering; believing that such self-restraint brought them nearer to the gods, and that death would set them free from the prison of the body. The souls of evil-doers would, they thought, pass into the lower and more degraded animals, while those of good men would be gradually purified, and rise to a higher existence. This, though lamentably deficient, and false in some points, was a real religion, inasmuch as it gave a rule of life, with a motive for striving for wisdom and virtue. Two friends of this Pythagorean sect lived at Syracuse, in the end of the fourth century before the Christian era. Syracuse was a great Greek city, built in Sicily; and full of all kinds of Greek art and learning; but it was a place of danger in their time, for it had

fallen under the tyranny of a man of strange and capricious temper, though of great abilities, namely, Dionysius. He is said to have been originally only a clerk in a public office, but his talents raised him to continually higher situations, and at length, in a great war with the Carthaginians, who had many settlements in Sicily, he became general of the army, and then found it easy to establish his power over the city.

This power was not according to the laws, for Syracuse, like most other cities, ought to have been governed by a council of magistrates; but Dionysius was an exceedingly able man, and made the city much more rich and powerful, he defeated the Carthaginians, and rendered Syracuse by far the chief city in the island, and he contrived to make every one so much afraid of him that no one durst attempt to overthrow his power. He was a good scholar, and very fond of philosophy and poetry, and he delighted to have learned men around him, and he had naturally a generous spirit; but the sense that he was in a position that did not belong to him, and that every one hated him for assuming it, made him very harsh and suspicious. It is of him that the story is told, that he had a chamber hollowed in the rock near his state prison, and constructed with galleries to conduct sounds like an ear, so that he might overhear the conversation of his captives; and of him, too, is told that famous anecdote which has become a proverb, that on hearing a friend, named Damocles

express a wish to be in his situation for a single day, he took him at his word, and Damocles found himself at a banquet with everything that could delight his senses, delicious foods, costly wine, flowers, perfumes, music; but with a sword with the point almost touching his head, and hanging by a single horsehair! This was to show the condition in which a usurper lived!

Thus Dionysius was in constant dread. He had a wide trench round his bedroom, with a drawbridge that he drew up and put down with his own hands; and he put one barber to death for boasting that he held a razor to the tyrant's throat every morning. After this he made his young daughters shave him; but by-and-by he would not trust them with a razor, and caused them to singe off his beard with hot nut-shells! He was said to have put a man named Antiphon to death for answering him, when he asked what was the best kind of brass, "That of which the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were made." These were the two Athenians who had killed the sons of Pisistratus the tyrant, so that the jest was most offensive, but its boldness might have gained forgiveness for it. One philosopher named Philoxenus, he sent to a dungeon for finding fault with his poetry, but he afterward composed another piece, which he thought so superior, that he could not be content without sending for this adverse critic to hear it. When he had finished reading it, he looked to Philoxenus for a compliment; but the philosopher

only turned round to the guards, and said dryly, "Carry me back to prison." This time Dionysius had the sense to laugh, and forgave his honesty.

All these stories may not be true; but that they should have been current in the ancient world shows what was the character of the man of whom they were told, how stern and terrible was his anger, and how easily it was incurred. Among those who came under it was a Pythagorean called Pythias, who was sentenced to death, according to the usual fate of those who fell under his suspicion.

Pythias had lands and relations in Greece, and he entreated as a favor to be allowed to return thither and arrange his affairs, engaging to return within a specified time to suffer death. The tyrant laughed his request to scorn. Once safe out of Sicily, who would answer for his return? Pythias made reply that he had a friend, who would become security for his return; and while Dionysius, the miserable man who trusted nobody, was ready to scoff at his simplicity, another Pythagorean, by name Damon, came forward, and offered to become surety for his friend, engaging that, if Pythias did not return according to promise, to suffer death in his stead.

Dionysius, much astonished, consented to let Pythias go, marveling what would be the issue of the affair. Time went on, and Pythias did not appear The Syracusans watched Damon, but he showed no uneasiness. He said he was secure of his friend's truth and

honor, and that if any accident had caused the delay of his return, he should rejoice in dying to save the life of one so dear to him.

Even to the last day Damon continued serene and content, however it might fall out; nay, even when the very hour drew nigh and still no Pythias. His trust was so perfect, that he did not even grieve at having to die for a faithless friend who had left him to the fate to which he had unwarily pledged himself. It was not Pythias' own will, but the winds and waves, so he still declared, when the decree was brought and the instruments of death made ready. The hour had come, and a few moments more would have ended Damon's life, when Pythias duly presented himself, embraced his friend, and stood forward himself to receive his sentence, calm, resolute, and rejoiced that he had come in time.

Even the dim hope they owned of a future state was enough to make these two brave men keep their word, and confront death for one another without quailing. Dionysius looked on more struck than ever. He felt that neither of such men must die. He reversed the sentence of Pythias, and calling the two to his judgment-seat, he entreated them to admit him as a third in their friendship. Yet all the time he must have known it was a mockery that he should ever be such as they were to each other—he who had lost the very power of trusting, and constantly sacrificed others to secure his own life, whilst they counted not

their lives dear to them in comparison with their truth to their word, and love to one another. No wonder that Damon and Pythias have become such a by-word that they seem too well known to have their story told here, except that a name in every one's mouth sometimes seems to be mentioned by those who have forgotten or never heard the tale attached to it.

THE DEVOTION OF THE DECII.

B. C. 339.

The spirit of self-devotion is so beautiful and noble, that even when the act is performed in obedience to the dictates of a false religion, it is impossible not to be struck with admiration and almost reverence for the unconscious type of the one great act that has hallowed every other sacrifice. Thus it was that Codrus, the Athenian king, has ever since been honored for the tradition that he gave his own life to secure the safety of his people; and there is a touching story, with neither name nor place, of a heathen monarch who was bidden by his priests to appease the supposed wrath of his gods by the sacrifice of the being dearest to him. His young son had been seized on as his most beloved, when his wife rushed between and declared that her son must live, and not by his death rob her of her right to fall, as her husband's dearest. The priest looked at the father; the face that had been sternly composed before was full of uncontrolled anguish as he sprang forward to save the wife rather than the child. That impulse was an answer, like the entreaty of the mother before Solomon; the priest struck the fatal blow ere the kings' hand could withhold him,

and the mother died with a last look of exceeding joy at her husband's love and her son's safety. Human sacrifices are of course accursed, and even the better sort of heathens viewed them with horror; but the voluntary confronting of death, even at the call of a distorted presage of future atonement, required qualities that were perhaps the highest that could be exercised among those who were devoid of the light of truth.

In the year 339 there was a remarkable instance of such devotion. The Romans were at war with the Latins, a nation dwelling to the south of them, and almost exactly resembling themselves in language, habits, government, and fashions of fighting. Indeed, the city of Rome itself was but an offshoot from the old Latin kingdom; and there was not much difference between the two nations even in courage and perseverance. The two consuls of the year were Titus Manlius Torquatus and Publius Decius Mus. They were both very distinguished men. Manlius was a patrician, or one of the high ancient nobles of Rome, and had in early youth fought a single combat with a gigantic Gaul, who offered himself, like Goliath, as a champion of his tribe; had slain him, and taken from him a gold torque, or collar, whence his surname Torquatus. Decius was a plebeian, one of the free though not noble citizens who had votes, but only within a few years had been capable of being chosen to the higher offices of state, and who looked upon every election to the consulship as a victory.

Three years previously, when a tribune in command of a legion, Decius had saved the consul, Cornelius Cossus, from a dangerous situation, and enabled him to gain a great victory; and this exploit was remembered, and led to the choice of this well-experienced soldier as the colleague of Manlius.

The two consuls both went out together in command of the forces, each having a separate army, and intending to act in concert. They marched to the beautiful country at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, which was then a harmless mountain clothed with chestnut woods, with spaces opening between, where farms and vineyards rejoiced in the sunshine and the fresh breezes of the lovely blue bay that lay stretched beneath. Those who climbed to the summit might indeed find beds of ashes and the jagged edge of a huge basin or gulf; the houses and walls were built of dark-red and black material that once had flowed from the crater in boiling torrents; but these had long since cooled, and so long was it since a column of smoke had been seen to rise from the mountain top, that it only remained as a matter of tradition that this region was one of mysterious fire, and that the dark cool lake Avernus, near the mountain skirts, was the very entrance to the shadowy realms beneath, that were supposed to be inhabited by the spirits of the dead.

It might be that the neighborhood of this lake, with the dread imaginations connected with it by pagan fancy, influenced even the

stout hearts of the consuls; for, the night after they came in sight of the enemy, each dreamt the same dream, namely, that he beheld a mighty form of gigantic height and stature, who told him "that the victory was decreed to that army of the two whose leader should devote himself to the Dii Manes," that is, to the deities who watched over the shades of the dead. Probably these older Romans held the old Etruscan belief, which took these "gods beneath" to be winged beings, who bore away the departing soul, weighed its merits and demerits, and placed it in a region of peace or of woe, according to its deserts. This was part of the grave and earnest faith that gave the earlier Romans such truth and resolution; but latterly they so corrupted it with the Greek myths, that, in after times, they did not even know who the gods of Decius were.

At daybreak the two consuls sought one another out, and told their dreams; and they agreed that they would join their armies in one, Decius leading the right and Manlius the left wing; and that whichever found his troops giving way, should at once rush into the enemy's columns and die, to secure the victory to his colleague. At the same time strict commands were given that no Roman should come out of his rank to fight in single combat with the enemy; a necessary regulation, as the Latins were so like, in every respect, to the Romans, that there would have been fatal confusion had there been any mingling together before the battle. Just as this com-

mand had been given out, young Titus Manlius, the son of the consul, met a Latin leader, who called him by name and challenged him to fight hand to hand. The youth was emulous of the honor his father had gained by his combat at the same age with the Gaul, but forgot both the present edict and that his father had scrupulously asked permission before accepting the challenge. He at once came forward, and after a brave conflict, slew his adversary, and taking his armor, presented himself at his father's tent and laid the spoils at his feet.

But old Manlius turned aside sadly, and collected his troops to hear his address to his son: "You have transgressed," he said, "the discipline which has been the support of the Roman people, and reduced me to the hard necessity of either forgetting myself and mine, or else the regard I owe to the general safety. Rome must not suffer by one fault. We must expiate it ourselves. A sad example shall we be, but a wholesome one to the Roman youth. For me, both the natural love of a father, and that specimen thou hast given of thy valor move me exceedingly; but since either the consular authority must be established by thy death, or destroyed by thy impunity, I can not think, if thou be a true Manlius, that thou wilt be backward to repair the breach thou hast made in military discipline by undergoing the just meed of thine offense." He then placed the wreath of leaves, the reward of a victor, upon his son's head, and gave the com-

mand to the lictor to bind the young man to a stake, and strike off his head. The troops stood round as men stunned, no one durst utter a word; the son submitted without one complaint, since his death was for the good of Rome; and the father, trusting that the doom of the Dii Manes was about to overtake him beheld the brave but rash young head fall, then watched the corpse covered with the trophies won from the Latins, and made no hindrance to the glorious obsequies with which the whole army honored this untimely death. Strict discipline was indeed established, and no one again durst break his rank; but the younger men greatly hated Manlius for his severity, and gave him no credit for the agony he had concealed while giving up his gallant son to the well-being of Rome.

A few days after, the expected battle took place, and after some little time the front rank of Decius' men began to fall back upon the line in their rear. This was the token he had waited for. He called to Valerius, the chief priest of Rome, to consecrate him, and was directed to put on his chief robe of office, the beautiful purple *toga praetexta*, to cover his head, and standing on his javelin, call aloud to the "nine gods" to accept his devotion, to save the Rome legions, and strike terror into his enemies. This done, he commanded his lictors to carry word to his colleague that the sacrifice was accomplished, and then girding his robe round him in the manner adopted in sacrificing to the gods, he mounted his white

horse, and rushed like lightning into the thickest of the Latins. At first they fell away on all sides as if some heavenly apparition had come down on them; then, as some recognized him, they closed in on him, and pierced his breast with their weapons; but even as he fell the superstition that a devoted leader was sure to win the field, came full on their minds, they broke and fled Meanwhile, the message came to Manlius, and drew from him a burst of tears—tears that he had not shed for his son—his hope of himself meeting the doom and ending his sorrow was gone; but none the less he nerved himself to complete the advantage gained by Decius' death. Only one wing of the Latins had fled, the other fought long and bravely; and when at last it was defeated, and cut down on the field of battle, both conqueror and conquered declared that, if Manlius had been the leader of the Latins, they would have had the victory. Manlius afterwards completely subdued the Latins, who became incorporated with the Romans; but bravely as he had borne up, his health gave way under his sorrow, and before the end of the year he was unable to take the field.

Forty-five years later, in the year 294, another Decius was consul. He was the son of the first devoted Decius, and had shown himself worthy of his name, both as a citizen and soldier. His first consulate had been in conjunction with one of the most high-spirited and famous Roman nobles, Quintus Fabius, surnamed Maximus, or the Greatest, and at

three years' end they were again chosen together, when the Romans had been brought into considerable peril by an alliance between the Gauls and the Samnites, their chief enemies in Italy.

One being a patrician and the other a plebeian, there was every attempt made at Rome to stir up jealousies and dissensions between them, but both were much too noble and generous to be thus set one against the other; and when Fabius found how serious was the state of affairs in Etruria, he sent to Rome to entreat that Decius would come and act with him. "With him I shall never want forces, nor have too many enemies to deal with."

The Gauls, since the time of Brennus, had so entirely settled in northern Italy, that it had acquired the name of Cisalpine Gaul, and they were as warlike as ever, while better armed and trained. The united armies of Gauls, Samnites, and their allies, together, are said to have amounted to 143,330 foot and 46,000 horse, and the Roman army consisted of four legions, 24,000 in all, with an unspecified number of horse. The place of battle was to Sentinum, and here for the first time the Gauls brought armed chariots into use,—probably the wicker chariots, with scythes in the midst of the clumsy wooden wheels, which were used by the Kelts in Britain two centuries later. It was the first time the Romans had encountered these barbarous vehicles; they were taken by surprise, the horses started, and could not be brought back to the

charge, and the legions were mowed down like corn where the furious Gaul impelled his scythe. Decius shouted in vain, and tried to gather his men and lead them back; but the terror at this new mode of warfare had so mastered them, that they paid no attention to his call. Then, half in policy, half in superstition, he resolved to follow his father in his death. He called the chief priest, Marcus Livius, and standing on his javelin, went through the same formula of self-dedication, and in like manner threw himself, alone and unarmed, in the midst of the enemy, among whom he soon fell, under many a savage stroke. The priest, himself a gallant soldier, called to the troops that their victory was now secured, and thoroughly believing him, they let him lead them back to the charge, and routed the Gauls; whilst Fabius so well did his part against the other nations, that the victory was complete, and 25,000 enemies were slain. So covered was the body of Decius by the corpses of his enemies, that all that day it could not be found; but on the next it was discovered, and Fabius, with a full heart, pronounced the funeral oration of the second Decius who had willingly offered himself to turn the tide of battle in favor of his country. It was the last of such acts of dedication—the Romans became more learned and philosophical, and perhaps more reasonable; and yet,

mistaken as was the object, it seem a falling off that, 200 years later, Cicero should not know who were the "nine gods" of the Decii, and should regard their sacrifice as "heroic indeed, but unworthy of men of understanding."

REGULUS.

B. C. 249.

The first wars that the Romans engaged in beyond the bounds of Italy, were with the Carthaginians. This race came from Tyre and Zidon; and were descended from some of the Phœnicians, or Zidonians, who were such dangerous foes, or more dangerous friends, to the Israelites. Carthage had, as some say, been first founded by some of the Canaanites who fled when Joshua conquered the Promised Land; and whether this were so or not, the inhabitants were in all their ways the same as the Tyrians and Zidonians, of whom so much is said in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Like them, they worshiped Baal and Ashtoreth, and the frightful Moloch, with foul and cruel rites; and, like them they were excellent sailors and great merchants, trading with every known country, and living in great riches and splendor at their grand city on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. That they were a wicked and cruel race is also certain; the Romans used to call deceit Punic faith, that is, Phœnician faith, and though no doubt Roman writers show them up in their worst colors, yet, after the time of Hiram, Sol-

omon's ally at Tyre, it is plain from Holy Scripture that their crimes were great.

The first dispute between Rome and Carthage was about their possession in the island of Sicily; and the war thus begun had lasted eight years, when it was resolved to send an army to fight the Carthaginians on their own shores. The army and fleet were placed under the command of the two consuls, Lucius Manlius and Marcus Attilius Regulus. On the way, there was a great sea-fight with the Carthaginian fleet, and this was the first naval battle that the Romans ever gained. It made the way to Africa free; but the soldiers, who had never been so far from home before, murmured, for they expected to meet not only human enemies, but monstrous serpents, lions, elephants, asses with horns, and dog-headed monsters, to have a scorching sun overhead, and a noisome marsh under their feet. However, Regulus sternly put a stop to all murmurs, by making it known that disaffection would be punished by death, and the army safely landed, and set up a fortification at Clypea, and plundered the whole country round. Orders here came from Rome that Manlius should return thither, but that Regulus should remain to carry on the war. This was a great grief to him. He was a very poor man, with nothing of his own but a little farm of seven acres, and the person whom he had employed to cultivate it had died in his absence; a hired laborer had undertaken the care of it, but had been unfaithful, and had run away

with his tools and his cattle, so that he was afraid that, unless he could return quickly, his wife and children would starve. However, the Senate engaged to provide for his family, and he remained, making expeditions into the country round, in the course of which the Romans really did fall in with a serpent, as monstrous as their imagination had depicted. It was said to be 120 feet long, and dwelt upon the banks of the river Bagrada, where it used to devour the Roman soldiers as they went to fetch water. It had such tough scales that they were obliged to attack it with their engines meant for battering city walls; and only succeeded with much difficulty in destroying it.

The country was most beautiful, covered with fertile corn-fields and full of rich fruit-trees, and all the rich Carthaginians had country-houses and gardens, which were made delicious with fountains, trees, and flowers. The Roman soldiers, plain, hardy, fierce, and pitiless, did it must be feared, cruel damage among these peaceful scenes; they boasted of having sacked 300 villages, and mercy was not yet known to them. The Carthaginian army, though strong in horsemen and in elephants, kept upon the hills and did nothing to save the country, and the wild desert tribes of Numidians came rushing into plunder what the Romans had left. The Carthaginians sent to offer terms of peace, but Regulus, who had become uplifted by his conquests, made such demands that the messengers remonstrated.

He answered, "Men who are good for anything should either conquer or submit to their betters;" and he sent them rudely away, like a stern old Roman as he was. His merit was that he had no more mercy on himself than on others.

The Carthaginians were driven to extremity, and made horrible offerings to Moloch, giving the little children of the noblest families to be dropped into the fire between the brazen hands of his statue, and grown-up people of the noblest families rushed in of their own accord, hoping thus to propitiate their gods, and obtain safety for their country. Their time was not yet fully come, and a respite was granted to them. They had sent, in their distress, to hire soldiers in Greece, and among these came a Spartan, named Xanthippus, who at once took the command, and led the army out to battle, with a long line of elephants ranged in front of them, and with clouds of horsemen hovering on the wings. The Romans had not yet learnt the best mode of fighting with elephants, namely, to leave lanes in their columns where these huge beasts might advance harmlessly; instead of which, the ranks were thrust and trampled down by the creatures' bulk, and they suffered a terrible defeat; Regulus himself was seized by the horsemen, and dragged into Carthage, where the victors feasted and rejoiced through half the night, and testified their thanks to Moloch by offering in his fires the bravest of their captives.

Regulus himself was not, however, one of these victims. He was kept a close prisoner for two years, pining and sickening in his loneliness, while in the meantime the war continued, and at last a victory so decisive was gained by the Romans, that the people of Carthage were discouraged, and resolved to ask terms of peace. They thought that no one would be so readily listened to at Rome as Regulus, and they therefore sent him there with their envoys, having first made him swear that he would come back to his prison if there should neither be peace nor an exchange of prisoners. They little knew how much more a true-hearted Roman cared for his city than for himself—for his word than for his life.

Worn and dejected, the captive warrior came to the outside of the gates of his own city, and there paused, refusing to enter. "I am no longer a Roman citizen," he said; "I am but the barbarians' slave, and the Senate may not give audience to strangers within the walls." His wife Marci ran out to greet him, with his two sons, but he did not look up, and received their caresses as one beneath their notice, as a mere slave, and he continued, in spite of all entreaty, to remain outside the city, and would not even go to the little farm he had loved so well.

The Roman Senate, as he would not come in to them, came out to hold their meetings in the Campagna.

The ambassadors spoke first, then Regulus, standing up, said, as one repeating a task,

"Conscript fathers, being a slave to the Carthaginians, I come on the part of my masters to treat with you concerning peace, and an exchange of prisoners." He then turned to go away with the ambassadors, as a stranger might not be present at the deliberations of the Senate. His old friends pressed him to stay and give his opinion as a senator who had twice been consul; but he refused to degrade that dignity by claiming it, slave as he was. But, at the command of his Carthaginian masters, he remained, though not taking his seat.

Then he spoke. He told the senators to persevere in the war. He said he had seen the distress of Carthage, and that a peace would be only to her advantage, not to that of Rome, and therefore he strongly advised that the war should continue. Then, as to the exchange of prisoners, the Carthaginian generals, who were in the hands of the Romans, were in full health and strength, whilst he himself was too much broken down to be fit for service again, and indeed he believed that his enemies had given him a slow poison, and that he could not live long. Thus he insisted that no exchange of prisoners should be made.

It was wonderful, even to Romans, to hear a man thus pleading against himself, and their chief priest came forward, and declared that, as his oath had been wrested from him by force, he was not bound by it to return to his captivity. But Regulus was too noble to listen to this for a moment. "Have you resolved to dishonor me?" he said. "I am not ignorant

that death and the extremest tortures are preparing for me; but what are these to the shame of an infamous action, or the wounds of a guilty mind? Slave as I am to Carthage, I have still the spirit of a Roman. I have sworn to return. It is my duty to go; let the gods take care of the rest."

The Senate decided to follow the advice of Regulus, though they bitterly regretted his sacrifice. His wife wept and entreated in vain that they would detain him; they could merely repeat their permission to him to remain; but nothing could prevail with him to break his word, and he turned back to the chains and death he expected as calmly as if he had been returning to his home. This was in the year B. C. 249.

"Let the gods take care of the rest," said the Roman; the gods whom alone he knew, and through whom he ignorantly worshiped the true God, whose Light was shining out even in this heathen's truth and constancy. How his trust was fulfilled is not known. The Senate, after the next victory, gave two Carthaginian generals to his wife and sons to hold as pledges for his good treatment; but when tidings arrived that Regulus was dead, Marcia began to treat them both with savage cruelty, though one of them assured her that he had been careful to have her husband well used. Horrible stories were told that Regulus had been put out in the sun with his eyelids cut off, rolled down a hill in a barrel with spikes, killed by being constantly kept awake, or else

crucified. Marcia seems to have set about, and perhaps believed in these horrors, and avenged them on her unhappy captives till one had died, and the Senate sent for her sons and severely reprimanded them. They declared it was their mother's doing, not theirs, and thenceforth were careful of the comfort of the remaining prisoner.

It may thus be hoped that the frightful tale of Regulus' sufferings was but formed by report acting on the fancy of a vindictive woman, and that Regulus was permitted to die in peace of the disease brought on far more probably by the climate and imprisonment, than by the poison to which he ascribed it. It is not the tortures he may have endured that make him one of the noblest characters of history, but the resolution that would neither let him save himself at the risk of his country's prosperity, nor forfeit the word that he had pledged.

THE BRAVE BRETHREN OF JUDAH.

B. C. 180.

It was about 180 years before the Christian era. The Jews had long since come home from Babylon, and built up their city and Temple at Jerusalem. But they were not free as they had been before. Their country belonged to some greater power, they had a foreign governor over them, and had to pay tribute to the king who was their master.

At the time we are going to speak of, this king was Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria. He was descended from one of those generals who, upon the death of Alexander the Great, had shared the East between them, and he reigned over all the country from the Mediterranean Sea even into Persia and the borders of India. He spoke Greek, and believed in both the Greek and Roman Gods, for he had spent some time at Rome in his youth; but in his Eastern kingdom he had learnt all the self-indulgent and violent habit to which people in those hot countries are especially tempted.

He was so fierce and passionate, that he was often called the "Madman," and he was very cruel to all who offended him. One of his greatest desires was, that the Jews should leave their true faith in one God, and do like

the Greeks and Syrians, his other subjects, worship the same idols and hold drunken feasts in their honor. Sad to say, a great many of the Jews had grown ashamed of their own true religion and the strict ways of their law, and thought them old-fashioned. They joined in the Greek sports, played games naked in the theater, joined in riotous processions, carrying ivy in honor of Bacchus, the god of wine, and offered incense to the idols; and the worst of all these was the false high-priest, Menelaus, who led the King Antiochus into the Temple itself, even into the Holy of Holies, and told him all that would most desecrate it and grieve the Jews. So a little altar to the Roman god Jupiter was set up on the top of the great brazen altar of burnt-offerings, a hog was offered up, and broth of its flesh sprinkled everywhere in the Temple; then all the precious vessels were seized, the shewbread table of gold, the candlesticks, and the whole treasury, and carried away by the king; the walls were thrown down, and the place made desolate.

Some Jews were still faithful to their God, but they were horribly punished and tortured to death before the eyes of the king; and when at last he went away to his own country, taking with him the wicked high-priest Menelaus, he left behind him a governor and an army of soldiers stationed in the tower of Acra, which overlooked the Temple-hill, and sent for an old man from Athens to teach the people the heathen rites and ceremonies. Any person

who observed the Sabbath-day, or any other ordinance of the law of Moses, was put to death in a most cruel manner; all the books of the Old Testament Scripture that could be found were either burnt or defiled, by having pictures of Greek gods painted upon them; and the heathen priests went from place to place, with a little brazen altar and image and a guard of soldiers, who were to kill every person who refused to burn incense before the idol. It was the very saddest time that the Jews had ever known, and there seemed to be no help near or far off; they could have no hope, except in the promises that God would never fail His people, or forsake His inheritance, and in the prophecies that bad times should come, but good ones after them.

The Greeks, in going through the towns to enforce the idol worship, came to a little city called Modin, somewhere on the hills on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, not far from Joppa. There they sent out, as usual, orders to all the men of the town to meet them in the market-place; but they were told beforehand, that the chief person in the place was an old man named Mattathias, of a priestly family, and so much respected, that all the other inhabitants of the place were sure to do whatever he might lead them in. So the Greeks sent for him first of all, and he came at their summons, a grand and noble old man, followed by his five sons, Johanan, Simon, Judas, Jonathan, and Eleazar. The Greek priest tried to talk him over. He told him that the

high-priest had forsaken the Jewish superstition, that the Temple was in ruins, and that resistance was in vain; and exhorted him to obtain gratitude and honor for himself, by leading his countrymen in thus adoring the deities of the king's choice, promising him rewards and treasures if he would comply.

But the old man spoke out with a loud and fearless voice: "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments; yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances! We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand or the left!"

As he spoke, up came an apostate Jew to do sacrifice at the heathen altar. Mattathias trembled at the sight, and his zeal broke forth. He slew the offender, and his brave sons gathering round him, they attacked the Syrian soldiers, killed the commissioner, and threw down the altar. Then, as they knew that they could not there hold out against the king's power, Mattathias proclaimed through the city: "Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant let him follow me!" With that, he and his five sons, with their families, left their houses and lands, and drove their cattle with them up into the wild hills and caves, where David had once made his home; and all the Jews who wished to be still

faithful, gathered round them, to worship God and keep His commandments.

There they were, a handful of brave men in the mountains, and all the heathen world and apostate Jews against them. They used to come down into the villages, remind the people of the law, promise their help, and throw down any idol altars that they found, and the enemy never were able to follow them into their rocky strongholds. But the old Mattathias could not long bear the rude wild life in the cold mountains, and he soon died. First he called all his five sons, and bade them to "be zealous for the law, and give their lives for the covenant of their fathers;" and he reminded them of all the many brave men who had before served God, and been aided in their extremity. He appointed his son Judas, as the strongest and mightiest, to lead his brethren to battle, and Simon, as the wisest, to be their counselor; then he blessed them and died; and his sons were able to bury him in the tomb of his fathers at Modin.

Judas was one of the bravest men who ever lived; never dreading the numbers that came against him. He was surnamed Maccabeus, which some people say meant the hammerer; but others think it was made up of the first letters of the words he carried on his banner, which meant, "Who is like unto Thee, among the gods, O Lord?" Altogether he had about six thousand men round him when the Greek governor, Apollonius, came out to fight with him. The Jews gained here their first great

victory, and Judas killed Apollonius, took his sword and fought all his other battles with it. Next came a captain called Seron, who went out to the hills to lay hold of the bold rebels that dared to rise against the King of Syria. The place where Judas met him was one to make the Jews' hearts leap with hope and trust. It was on the steep stony broken hillside of Beth-horon, the very place where Joshua had conquered the five kings of the Amorites, in the first battle on the coming in of the children of Israel to Palestine. There was the rugged path where Joshua had stood and called out to the sun to stand still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. Miracles were over, and Judas looked for no wonder to help him; but when he came up the mountain road from Joppa, his heart was full of the same trust as Joshua's, and he won another great victory.

By this time King Antiochus began to think the rising of the Jews a serious matter, but he could not come himself against them, because his provinces in Armenia and Persia had refused their tribute, and he had to go in person to reduce them. He appointed, however, a governor, named Lysias, to chastise the Jews, giving him an army of 40,000 foot and 7,000 horse. Half of these Lysias sent on before him, with two captains, named Nicanor and Gorgias, thinking that these would be more than enough to hunt down and crush the little handful that were lurking in the hills. And with them came a great number of slave mer-

chants, who had bargained with Nicanor that they should have ninety Jews for one talent, to sell to the Greeks and Romans, by whom Jewish slaves were much esteemed.

There was great terror in Palestine at these tidings, and many of the weaker minded fell away from Judas; but he called all the faithful together at Mizpeh, the same place where, 1,000 years before, Samuel had collected the Israelites, and, after prayer and fasting, had sent them forth to free their country from the Philistines. Shiloh, the sanctuary, was then lying desolate, just as Jerusalem now lay in ruins; and yet better times had come. But very mournful was that fast day at Mizpeh, as the Jews looked along the hillside to their own holy mountain crowned by no white marble and gold Temple flashing back the sunbeams, but only with the tall castle of their enemies towering over the precipice. They could not sacrifice, because a sacrifice could only be made at Jerusalem, and the only book of the Scriptures that they had to read from was painted over with the hateful idol figures of the Greeks. And the huge army of enemies was ever coming nearer! The whole assembly wept, and put on sackcloth and prayed aloud for help, and then there was a loud sounding of trumpets, and Judas stood forth before them. And he made the old proclamation that Moses had long ago decreed, that no one should go out to battle who was building a house, or planting a vineyard, or had just betrothed a wife, or who was fearful and faint-hearted.

All these were to go home again. Judas had 6,000 followers when he made this proclamation. He had only 3,000 at the end of the day, and they were but poorly armed. He told them of the former aid that had come to their fathers in extremity, and made them bold with his noble words. Then he gave them for their watchword "the help of God," and divided the leadership of the band between himself and his brothers, appointing Eleazar, the youngest, to read the Holy Book.

With these valiant men Judas set up his camp; but tidings were soon brought him that Gorgias, with 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse, had left the main body to fall on his little camp by night. He therefore secretly left the place in the twilight; so that when the enemy attacked his camp, they found it deserted, and supposing them to be hid in the mountains, proceeded thither in pursuit of them.

But in the early morning Judas and his 3,000 men were all in battle array in the plains, and marching full upon the enemy's camp with trumpet sound, took them by surprise in the absence of Gorgias and his choice troops, and utterly defeated and put them to flight, but without pursuing them, since the fight with Gorgias and his 5,000 might be yet to come. Even as Judas was reminding his men of this, Gorgias's troops were seen looking down from the mountains where they had been wandering all night; but seeing their own camp all smoke and flame, they turned and fled away. Nine thousand of the invaders had been slain, and

the whole camp, full of arms and treasures, was in the hands of Judas, who there rested for a Sabbath of glad thanksgiving, and the next day parted the spoil, first putting out the share for the widows and orphans and the wounded, and then dividing the rest among his warriors. As to the slave merchants, they were all made prisoners, and instead of giving a talent for ninety Jews, were sold themselves.

The next year Lysias came himself, but was driven back and defeated at Bethshur, four or five miles south of Bethlehem. And now came the saddest, yet the greatest, day of Judas's life, when he ventured to go back into the holy city and take possession of the Temple again. The strong tower of Acra, which stood on a ridge of Mount Moriah looking down on the Temple rock, was still held by the Syrians, and he had no means of taking it; but he and his men loved the sanctuary too well to keep away from it, and again they marched up the steps and slopes that led up the holy hill. They went up to find the walls broken, the gates burnt, the cloisters and priests' chambers pulled down, and the courts thickly grown with grass and shrubs, the altar of their one true God with the false idol Jupiter's altar in the middle of it. These warriors, who had turned three armies to flight, could not bear the sight. They fell down on their faces, threw dust upon their heads, and wept aloud for the desolation of their holy place. But in the midst Judas caused the trumpets to

sound an alarm. They were to do something besides grieving. The bravest of them were set to keep watch and ward against the Syrians in the tower, while he chose out the most faithful priests to cleanse out the sanctuary, and renew all that could be renewed, making new holy vessels from the spoil taken in Nicanor's camp, and setting the stones of the profaned altar apart while a new one was raised. On the third anniversary of the great profanation, the Temple was newly dedicated, with songs and hymns of rejoicing, and a festival day was appointed, which has been observed by the Jews ever since. The Temple rock and city were again fortified so as to be able to hold out against their enemies, and this year and the next were the most prosperous of the life of the loyal-hearted Maccabee.

The great enemy of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes, was in the meantime dying in great agony in Persia, and his son Antiochus Eupator was set on the throne by Lysias, who brought him with an enormous army to reduce the rising in Judea.

The fight was again at Bethshur, where Judas had built a strong fort on a point of rock that guarded the road to Hebron. Lysias tried to take this fort, and Judas came to the rescue with his little army, to meet the far mightier Syrian force, which was made more terrific by possessing thirty war elephants imported from the Indian frontier. Each of these creatures carried a tower containing thirty-two men armed with darts and javelins.

and an Indian driver on his neck; and they had 1,000 foot and 500 horse attached to the special following of the beast, who, gentle as he was by nature, often produced a fearful effect on the enemy; not so much by his huge bulk as by the terror he inspired among men, and far more among horses. The whole host was spread over the mountains, and in the valleys, so that it is said that their bright armor and gold and silver shields made the mountain glisten like lamps of fire.

Still Judas pressed on to the attack, and his brother Eleazar, perceiving that one of the elephants was more adorned than the rest, thought it might be carrying the king, and devoted himself for his country. He fought his way to the monster, crept under it and stabbed it from beneath, so that the mighty weight sank down on him and crushed him to death in his fall. He gained a "perpetual name" for valor and self-devotion; but the king was not upon the elephant, and after a hard-fought battle, Judas was obliged to draw off and leave Bathshur to be taken by the enemy, and to shut himself up in Jerusalem.

There, want of provisions had brought him to great distress, when tidings came that another son of Antiochus Epiphanes had claimed the throne, and Lysias made peace in haste with Judas, promising him full liberty of worship, and left Palestine in peace.

This did not, however, last long. Lysias and his young master were slain by the new king, Demetrius, who again sent an army for

the subjection of Judas, and further appointed a high-priest, named Alcimus, of the family of Aaron, but inclined to favor the new heathen fashions.

This was the most fatal thing that had happened to Judas. Though of the priestly line, he was so much a warrior, that he seems to have thought it would be profane to offer sacrifice himself; and many of the Jews were so glad of another high-priest, that they let Alcimus into the Temple, and Jerusalem was again lost to Judas. One more battle was won by him at Beth-horon, and then finding how hard it was to make head against the Syrians, he sent to ask the aid of the great Roman power. But long before the answer could come, a huge Syrian army had marched in on the Holy Land, 20,000 men, and Judas had again no more than 3,000. Some had gone over to Alcimus, some were offended at his seeking Roman alliance, and when at Eleasah he came in sight of the host, his men's hearts failed more than ever they had done before, and, out of the 3,000 at first collected, only 800 stood with him, and they would fain have persuaded him to retreat.

"God forbid that I should do this thing," he said, "and flee away from them. If our time be come, let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honor."

Sore was the battle, as sore as that waged by the 800 at Thermopylæ, and the end was the same. Judas and his 800 were not driven from the field, but lay dead upon it. But their

work was done. What is called the moral effect of such a defeat goes further than many a victory. Those lives, sold so dearly, were the price of freedom for Judea.

Judas's brothers Jonathan and Simon laid him in his father's tomb, and then ended the work that he had begun; and when Simon died, the Jews, once so trodden on, were the most prosperous race in the East. The Temple was raised from its ruins, and the exploits of the Maccabees had nerved the whole people to do or die in defense of the holy faith of their fathers.

THE CHIEF OF THE ARVERNI.

B.C. 52.

We have seen the Gauls in the heart of Rome, we have now to see them showing the last courage of despair, defending their native lands against the greatest of all the conquerors that Rome ever sent forth.

These lands, where they had dwelt for so many years as justly to regard them as their inheritance, were Gaul. There the Celtic race had had their abode ever since history has spoken clearly, and had become, in Gaul especially, slightly more civilized, from intercourse with the Greek colony at Massilia, or Marseilles. But they had become borderers upon the Roman dominions, and there was little chance that they would not be absorbed; the tribes of Provence, the first Roman province, were already conquered, others were in alliance with Rome, and some had called in the Romans to help them fight their battles. There is no occasion to describe the seven years' war by which Julius Cæsar added Gaul to the provinces claimed by Rome, and when he visited Britain; such conquests are far from being Golden Deeds, but are far worthier of the iron age. It is the stand made by the

losing party, and the true patriotism of one young chieftain, that we would wish here to dwell upon.

In the sixth year of the war the conquest seemed to have been made, and the Roman legions were guarding the north and west, while Cæsar himself had crossed the Alps. Subjection pressed heavily on the Gauls, some of their chiefs had been put to death, and the high spirit of the nation was stirred. Meetings took place between the warriors of the various tribes, and an oath was taken by those who inhabited the center of the country, that if they once revolted, they would stand by one another to the last. These Gauls were probably not tall, body giants, like the pillagers of Rome; their appearance and character would be more like that of the modern Welsh, or of their own French descendants, small, alert and dark-eyed, full of fire, but, though fierce at the first onset, soon rebuffed, yet with much perseverance in the long run. Their worship was conducted by Druids, like that of the Britons, and their dress was of checked material, formed into a loose coat and wide trousers. The superior chiefs, who had had any dealings with Rome, would speak a little Latin, and have a few Roman weapons as great improvements upon their own. Their fortifications were wonderfully strong. Trunks of trees were laid on the ground at two feet apart, so that the depth of the wall was their full length. Over these another tier of beams was laid crosswise, and the space between was

filled up with earth, and the outside faced with large stones; the building of earth and stone was carried up to some height, then came another tier of timbers, crossed as before, and this was repeated again to a considerable height, the inner ends of the beams being fastened to a planking within the wall, so that the whole was of immense compactness. Fire could not damage the mineral part of the construction, nor the battering ram hurt the wood, and the Romans had been often placed in great difficulties by these rude but admirable constructions, within which the Gauls placed their families and cattle, building huts for present shelter. Of late, some attempts had been made at copying the regular streets and houses built round courts that were in use among the Romans, and Roman colonies had been established in various places, where veteran soldiers had received grants of land on condition of keeping the natives in check. A growing taste for arts and civilization was leading to Romans of inferior classes settling themselves in other Gallic cities.

The first rising of the Gauls began by a quarrel at the city we now call Orleans, ending in a massacre of all the Romans there. The tidings were spread through all the country by loud shouts, repeated from one to the other by men stationed on every hill, and thus, what had been done at Orleans at sunrise was known by nine at night 160 miles off among the mountains, which were then the homes of a tribe called by the Romans the Arverni, who

have left their name to the province of Auvergne.

Here dwelt a young chieftan, probably really called Fearincedorigh, or Man who is chief of a hundred heads, known to us by Cæsar's version of his name, as Vercingetorix, a high-spirited youth, who keenly felt the servitude of his country, and who, on receiving these tidings, instantly called on his friends to endeavor to shake off the yoke. His uncle, who feared to provoke Roman vengeance, expelled him from the chief city, Gergovia, the remains of which may be traced on the mountain still called Gergoie, about six miles from Clermont; but he collected all the younger and more high-spirited men, forced a way into the city, and was proclaimed chief of his tribe. All the neighboring tribes joined in the league against the common enemy, and tidings were brought to Cæsar that the whole country round the Loire was in a state of revolt.

In the heart of winter he hurried back, and took the Gauls by surprise by crossing the snows that lay thick on the wild waste of the Cebenna which the Arverni had always considered as their impenetrable barrier throughout the winter. The towns quickly fell into his hands, and he was rapidly recovering all he had lost, when Vercingetorix, collecting his chief supporters, represented to them that their best hope would be in burning all the inhabited places themselves and driving off all the cattle, then lying in wait to cut off all the convoys of provisions that should be sent to

the enemy, and thus starving them into a retreat. He said that burning houses was indeed a grievous sight, but it would be still more grievous to see their wives and children dragged into captivity. To this all the allies agreed, and twenty towns in one district were burnt in a single day; but when they came to the city of Avaricum, now called Bourges, the tribe of Bituriges, to whom it belonged, entreated on their knees not to be obliged to destroy the most beautiful city in the country, representing that, as it had a river on one side, and a morass everywhere else, except at a very narrow entrance, it might be easily held out against the enemy, and to their entreaties Vercingetorix yielded, though much against his own judgment.

Cæsar laid siege to the place, but his army suffered severely from cold and hunger; they had no bread at all, and lived only on the cattle driven in from distant villages, while Vercingetorix hovered round, cutting off their supplies. They, however, labored diligently to raise a mount against the wall of the town; but as fast as they worked, the higher did the Gauls within raise the stages of their rampart, and for twenty-five days there was a most brave defence; but at last the Romans made their entrance, and slaughtered all they found there, except 800, who escaped to the camp of Vercingetorix. He was not disconcerted by this loss, which he had always expected, but sheltered and clothed the fugitives, and raised a great body of archers and of horsemen, with

whom he returned to his own territory in Auvergne. There was much fighting around the city of Gergovia; but at length, owing to the revolt of the Ædui, another Gallic tribe, Cæsar was forced to retreat over the Loire; and the wild peaks of volcanic Auvergne were free again.

But no gallant resolution could long prevail against the ever-advancing power of Rome, and at length the Gauls were driven into their fortified camp at Alesia, now called Alise,* a city standing on a high hill, with two rivers flowing round its base, and a plain in front about three miles wide. Everywhere else it was circled in by high hills, and here Cæsar resolved to shut these brave men in and bring them to bay. He caused his men to begin that mighty system of earthworks by which the Romans caried on their attacks, compassing their victim round on every side with a deadly slowness and sureness by those broad ditches and terraced ramparts that everywhere mark where their foot of iron has trod. Eleven miles round did this huge rampart extend, strengthened by three-and-twenty redoubts, or places of defense, where a watch was continually kept. Before the lines were complete, Vercingetorix brought out his cavalry, and gave battle, at one time with a hope of success; but the enemy were too strong for him, and his horsemen were driven into the camp. He then resolved to send home all of these, since they could be of no use in the camp, and

*In Burgundy, between Semur and Dijon.

had better escape before the ditch should have shut them in on every side. He charged them to go to their several tribes and endeavor to assemble all the fighting men to come to his rescue; for, if he were not speedily succored, he and 80,000 of the bravest of the Gauls must fall into the hands of the Romans, since he had only corn for thirty days, even with the utmost saving.

Having thus exhorted them, he took leave of them, and sent them away at nine at night, so that they might escape in the dark where the Roman trench had not yet extended. Then he distributed the cattle among his men, but retained the corn himself, serving it out with the utmost caution. The Romans outside fortified their camp with a double ditch, one of them full of water, behind which was a bank twelve feet high, with stakes forked like the horns of a stag. The space between the ditches was filled with pits, and scattered with iron caltrops or hooked spikes. All this was against the garrison, to prevent them from breaking out; and outside the camp he made another line of ditches and ramparts against the Gauls who might be coming to the rescue. The other tribes were not deaf to the summons of their friends, but assembled in large numbers, and just as the besieged had exhausted their provisions, an army was seen on the hills beyond the camp. Their commander was Vergosillaunus (most probably Fearsaighan, the Man of the Standard), a near kinsman of Vercingetorix; and all that bravery could do, they

did to break through the defences of the camp from outside, while within, Vercingetorix and his 80,000 tried to fill up the ditches, and force their way out to meet their friends. But Cæsar himself commanded the Romans, who were confident in his fortunes, and raised a shout of ecstasy wherever they beheld his thin, marked, eagle face and purple robe, rushing on the enemy with a confidence of victory that did in fact render them invincible. The Gauls gave way, lost seventy-four of their standards, and Vergosillaunus himself was taken prisoner; and as for the brave garrison within Alesia, they were but like so many flies struggling in vain within the enormous web that had been woven around them. Hope was gone, but the chief of the Arveni could yet do one thing for his countrymen—he could offer up himself in order to obtain better terms for them.

The next day he convened his companions in arms, and told them that he had only fought for the freedom of their country, not to secure his private interest; and that now, since yield they must, he freely offered himself to become a victim for their safety, whether they should judge it best for themselves to appease the anger of the conqueror by putting him to death themselves, or whether they preferred giving him up alive.

It was a piteous necessity to have to sacrifice their noblest and bravest, who had led them so gallantly during the long war; but they had little choice, and could only send messengers

to the camp to offer to yield Vercingetorix as the price of their safety. Cæsar made it known that he was willing to accept their submission, and drawing up his troops in battle array, with the Eagle standards around him, he watched the whole Gallic army march past him. First, Vercingetorix was placed as a prisoner in his hands, and then each man laid down sword, javelin, or bow and arrows, helmet, buckler, and breastplate, in one mournful heap, and proceeded on his way, scarcely thankful that the generosity of their chieftain had purchased for them subjection rather than death.

Vercingetorix himself had become the property of the great man from whom alone we know of his deeds; who could perceive his generous spirit and high qualities as a general, nay, who honored the self-devotion by which he endeavored to save his countrymen. He remained in captivity—six long years sped by—while Cæsar passed the Rubicon, fought out his struggle for power at Rome, and subdued Egypt, Pontus and Northern Africa—and all the time the brave Gaul remained closely watched and guarded, and with no hope of seeing the jagged peaks and wild valleys of his own beautiful Auvergne. For well did he, like every other marked foe of Rome, know for what he was reserved, and no doubt he yielded himself in the full expectation of that fate which many a man, as brave as he, had escaped by self-destruction.

The day came at last. In July, B. C. 45,

the victorious Cæsar had leisure to celebrate his victories in four grand triumphs, all in one month, and that in honor of the conquest of Gaul came the first. The triumphal gate of Rome was thrown wide open, every house was decked with hangings of silk and tapestry, the household images of every family, dressed with fresh flowers, were placed in their porches, those of the gods stood on the steps of the temples and marched in the procession, the magistrates first in their robes of office, and then the trumpeters. Next came the tokens of the victory—figures of the supposed gods of the two great rives, Rhine and Rhone, and even of the captive Ocean, made in gold, were carried along, with pictures framed in citron wood, showing the scenes of the victory—the wild waste of the Cevennes, the steep peaks of Auvergne, the mighty camp of Alesia; nay, there too would be the white cliffs of Dover, and the struggle with the Britons on the beach. Models in wood and ivory showed the fortifications of Avaricum, and of many another city; and here too were carried specimens of the olives and vines, and other curious plants of the newly-won land; here was the breastplate of British pearls that Cæsar dedicated to Venus. A band of flute-players followed, and then came the white oxen that were to be sacrificed, their horns gilded and flowers hung round them, the sacrificing priests with wreathed heads marching with them. Specimens of bears and wolves from the woods and mountains came next in order, and after them

waved for the last time the national ensigns of the many tribes of Gaul. Once more Vercingetorix and Vergosillaunus saw their own Arvernian standard, and marched behind it with the noblest of their clan; once more they wore their native dress and well-tried armor. But chains were on their hands and feet, and the men who had fought so long and well for freedom, were the captive gazing-stock of Rome. Long, long was the line of chained Gauls of every tribe, before the four white horses appeared, all abreast, drawing the gilded car, in which stood a slight form in a purple robe, with the bald head and narrow temples encircled with a wreath of bay, the thin cheeks tinted with vermilion, the eager aquiline face and narrow lips gravely composed to Roman dignity, and the quick eye searching out what impression the display was making on the people. Over his head a slave held a golden crown, but whispered, "Remember that thou too art a man." And in following that old custom, how little did the victor know that, bay-crowned like himself, there followed close behind, in one of the chariots of the officers, the man whose dagger-thrust would, two years later be answered by his dying word of reproach! The horsemen of the army followed, and then the legions, every spear wreathed, every head crowned with bay, so that an evergreen grove might have seemed marching through the Roman streets, but for the war songs, and the wild jests, and ribald ballads that custom allowed the soldiers to

shout out, often in pretended mockery of their own victorious general, the Imperator.

The victor climbed the Capitol steps, and laid his wreath of bay on Jupiter's knees, the white oxen were sacrificed and the feast began by torchlight. Where was the vanquished? He was led to the dark prison vault in the side of the Capitoline hill, and there one sharp sword-thrust ended the gallant life and long captivity.

It was no special cruelty in Julius Cæsar. Every Roman triumph was stained by the slaughter of the most distinguished captives, after the degradation of walking in chains had been undergone. He had spirit to appreciate Vercingetorix, but had not nobleness to spare him from the ordinary fate. Yet we may doubt which, in true moral greatness, was the superior in that hour of triumph, the conqueror who trod down all that he might minister to his own glory, or the conquered, who, when no resistance had availed, had voluntarily confronted shame and death in hopes to win pardon and safety for his comrades.

WITHSTANDING THE MONARCH IN HIS WRATH.

A. D. 389.

When a monarch's power is unchecked by his people, there is only One to whom he believes himself accountable; and if be have forgotten the dagger of Domocles, or if he be too high-spirted to regard it, then that Higher One alone can restrain his actions. And there have been times when princes have so broken the bounds of right, that no hope remains of recalling them to their duty save by the voice of the ministers of God upon Earth. But as these ministers bear no charmed life, and are subjects themselves of the prince, such rebukes have been given at the utmost risk of liberty and life.

Thus it was that though Nathan, unharmed, showed David his sin, and Elijah, the wondrous prophet of Gilead, was protected from Jezebel's fury, when he denounced her and her husband Ahab for the idolatry of Baal and the murder of Naboth; yet no Divine hand interposed to shield Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, the high-priest, when he rebuked the apostacy of his cousin, Jehoash, King of Judah, and was stoned to death by the un-

grateful king's command in that very temple court where Jehoaida and his armed Levites had encountered the savage usurpring Athaliah, and won back the kingdom for the child Jehoash. And when "in the spirit and power of Elijah," St. John the Baptist denounced the sin of Herod Antipas in marrying his brother Philip's wife, he bore the consequences to the utmost, when thrown into prison and then beheaded to gratify the rage of the vindictive woman.

Since Scripture Saints in the age of miracles were not always shielded from the wrath of kings, Christian bishops could expect no special interposition in their favor, when they stood forth to stop the way of the sovereign's passions, and to proclaim that the cause of mercy, purity, and truth in the cause of God.

The first of these Christian bishops was Ambrose, the sainted prelate of Milan. It was indeed a Christian Emperor whom he opposed, no other than the great Theodosius, but it was a new and unheard-of thing for any voice to rebuke an Emperor of Rome, and Theodosius had proved himself a man of violent passions.

The fourth century was a time when races and all sorts of shows were the fashion, nay, literally the rage; for furious quarrels used to arise among the spectators who took the part of one or other of the competitors, and would call themselves after their colors, the Blues or the Greens. A favorite chariot driver, who had excelled in these races at Thessalonica, was thrown into prison for some misdemeanor

by Botheric, the Governor of Illyria, and his absence so enraged the Thessalonican mob, that they rose in tumult, and demanded his restoration. On being refused, they threw such a hail of stones that the governor himself and some of his officers were slain.

Theodosius might well be displeased, but his rage passed all bounds. He was at Milan at the time, and at first Ambrose so worked on his feelings as to make him promise to temper justice with mercy; but afterwards fresh accounts of the murder, together with the representations of his courtier Rufinus, made him resolve not to relent, and he sent off messengers commanding that there should be a general slaughter of all the race-going Thessalonicans, since all were equally guilty of Botheric's death. He took care that his horrible command should be kept a secret from Ambrose, and the first that the Bishop heard of it was the tidings that 7,000 persons had been killed in the teater, in a massacre lasting three hours!

There was no saving these lives, but Ambrose felt it his duty to make the Emperor feel his sin, in hopes of saving others. Besides, it was not consistent with the honor of God to receive at his altar a man reeking with innocent blood. The Bishop however took time to consider; he went into the country for a few days, and thence wrote a letter to the Emperor, telling him that thus stained with crime, he could not be admitted to the Holy Communion nor received into church. Still the

Emperor does not seem to have believed he could be really withstood by any subject, and on Ambrose's return, he found the imperial procession, lictors, guards and all, escorting the Emperor as usual to the Basilica or Justice Hall, that had been turned into a church.

Then to the door came the Bishop and stood in the way, forbidding the entrance, and announcing that there at least, sacrilege should not be added to murder.

"Nay," said the Emperor, "did not King David commit both murder and adultery, yet was not he received again?"

"If you have sinned like him, repent like him," answered Ambrose.

Theodosius turned away, troubled. He was great enough not to turn his anger against the Bishop; he felt that he had sinned, and that the chastisment was merited, and he went back to his palace weeping, and there spent eight months, attending to his duties of state, but too proud to go through the tokens of penitence that the discipline of the church had prescribed before a great sinner could be received back into the congregation of the faithful. Easter was the usual time for reconciling penitents, and Ambrose was not inclined to show any respect of persons, or to excuse the Emperor from a penance he would have imposed on any offender. However, Rufinus could not believe in such disregard, and thought all would give way to the Emperor's will. Christmas had come, but for one man at

Milan there were not hymns, no shouts of "glad tidings!" no midnight festival, no rejoicing that "to us a Child is born; to us a Son is given." The Basilica was thronged with worshipers and rang with their Amens, resounding like thunder, and their echoing song—the *Te Deum*—then their newest hymn of praise. But the lord of all those multitudes was alone in his palace. He had not shown good will to man; he had not learnt mercy and peace from the Prince of Peace; and the door was shut upon him. He was a resolute Spanish Roman, a well tried soldier; a man advancing in years, but he wept, and wept bitterly. Rufinus found him, thus weeping. It must have been strange to the courtier that his master did not send his lictors to carry the offending bishop to a dungeon, and give all his court favor to the heretics, like the last empress who had reigned at Milan. Nay, he might even, like Julian the Apostate, have altogether renounced that Christian faith which could humble an emperor below the poorest of his subjects.

But Rufinus contented himself with urging the Emperor not to remain at home lamenting, but to endeavor again to obtain admission into the church, assuring him that the Bishop would give way. Theodosius replied that he did not expect it, but yielded to the persuasions, and Rufinus hastened on before to warn the Bishop of his coming, and represented how inexpedient it was to offend him.

"I warn you," replied Ambrose, "that I shall oppose his entrance, but if he chooses to

turn his power into tyranny, I shall willingly let him slay me."

The Emperor did not try to enter the church, but sought Ambrose in an adjoining building, where he entreated to be absolved from his sin.

"Beware," returned the Bishop, "of trampling on the laws of God."

"I respect them," said the Emperor, "therefore I have not set foot in the church, but I pray thee to deliver me from these bonds, and not to close against me the door that the Lord hath opened to all who truly repent."

"What repentance have you shown for such a sin?" asked Ambrose.

"Appoint my penance," said the Emperor, entirely subdued.

And Ambrose caused him at once to sign a decree that thirty days should always elapse between a sentence of death and its execution. After this, Theodosius was allowed to come into the church, but only to the corner he had shunned all these eight months, till the "dull hard stone within him" had "melted," to the spot appointed for the penitents. There, without his crown, his purple robe, and buskins, worked with golden eagles, all laid aside, he lay prostrate on the stones, repeating the verse, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word." This was the place that penitents always occupied, and there fasts and other discipline were also appointed. When the due course had been gone through, probably at the next Easter,

Ambrose, in his Master's name, pronounced the forgiveness of Theodosius, and received him back to the full privileges of a Christian. When we look at the course of many another emperor, and see how easily, where the power was irresponsible, justice became severity, and severity bloodthirstiness, we see what Ambrose dared to meet, and from what he spared Theodosius and all the civilized world under his sway. Who can tell how many innocent lives have been saved by that thirty days' respite?

Pass over nearly 700 years, and again we find a church door barred against a monarch. This time it is not under the bright Italian sky, but under the gray fogs of the Baltic sea. It is not the stately marble gateway of the Milanese Basilica, but the low-arched, rough-stone portal of the newly-built cathedral of Roskilde, in Zealand, where, if a zig-zag surrounds the arch, it is a great effort of genius. The Danish king Swend, the nephew of the well-known Knut, stands before it; a stern and powerful man, fierce and passionate, and with many a Danish ax at his command. Nay, only lately for a few rude jests, he caused some of his chief jarls to be slain without a trial. Half the country is still pagan, and though the king himself is baptized, there is no certainty that, if the Christian faith do not suit his taste, he may not join the heathen party and return to the worship of Thor and Tyr, where deeds of blood would be not blameworthy, but a passport to the rude joys

of Valhall. Nevertheless there is a pastoral staff across the doorway, barring the way of the king, and that staff is held against him by an Englishman, William, Bishop of Roskilde, the missionary who had converted a great part of Zealand, but who will not accept Christians who have not laid aside their sins.

He confronts the king who has never been opposed before. "Go back," he says, "nor dare approach the altar of God—thou who art not a king, but a murderer."

Some of the jarls seized their swords and axes, and were about to strike the bishop away from the threshold, but he, without removing his staff, bent his head, and bade them strike, saying he was ready to die in the cause of God. But the king came to a better frame of mind, he called the jarls away, and returning humbly to his palace, took off his royal robes, and came again barefoot and in sackcloth to the church door, where Bishop William met him, took him by the hand, gave him the kiss of peace, and led him to the penitents' place. After three days he was absolved, and for the rest of his life, the bishop and the king lived in the closest friendship, so much so that William always prayed that even in death he might not be divided from his friend. The prayer was granted. The two died almost at the same time, and were buried together in the cathedral at Roskilde, where the one had taught and the other learnt the great lesson of mercy.

THE LAST FIGHT IN THE COLISEUM.

A. D. 404.

As the Romans grew prouder and more fond of pleasure, no one could hope to please them who did not give them sports and entertainments. When any person wished to be elected to any public office, it was a matter of course that he should compliment his fellow-citizens by exhibitions of the kind they loved, and when the common people were discontented, their cry was that they wanted *panem ac Circenses*, "bread and sports," the only things they cared for. In most places where there has been a large Roman colony, remains can be seen of the amphitheaters, where the citizens were wont to assemble for these diversions. Sometimes these are stages of circular galleries of seats hewn out of the hillside, where rows of spectators might sit one above the other, all looking down on a broad, flat space in the center, under their feet, where the representations took place. Sometimes, when the country was flat, or it was easier to build than to excavacate, the amphitheater was raised above ground, rising up to a considerable height.

The grandest and most renowned of all these amphitheaters is the Coliseum at Rome.

It was built by Vespasian and his son Titus, the conquerors of Jerusalem, in a valley in the midst of the seven hills of Rome. The captive Jews were forced to labor at it; and the materials, granite outside, and softer travertine stone within, are so solid and so admirably built, that still at the end of eighteen centuries it has scarcely even become a ruin, but remains one of the greatest wonders of Rome.

Five acres of ground were enclosed within the oval of its outer wall, which outside rises perpendicularly in tiers of arches one above the other. Within, the galleries of seats projected forward, each tier coming out far beyond the one above it, so that between the lowest and the outer wall there was room for a great space of chambers, passages, and vaults around the central space, called the arena, from the *arena*, or stand, with which it was strewn.

When the Roman Emperors grew very vain and luxurious, they used to have this sand made ornamental with metallic filings, vermillion, and even powdered precious stones, but it was thought better taste to use the scrapings of a soft white stone, which, when thickly strewn, made the whole arena look as if covered with untrodden snow. Around the border of this space flowed a stream of fresh water. Then came a straight wall, rising to a considerable height, and surmounted by a broad platform, on which stood a throne for the Emperor, curule chairs of ivory and gold for the chief magistrates and senators, and

seats for the vestal virgins. Next above were galleries for the equestrian order, the great mass of those who considered themselves as of gentle station, though not of the highest rank; farther up, and therefore further back, were the galleries belonging to the freemen of Rome; and these were again surmounted by another plain wall with a platform at the top, where were places for the ladies, who were not (except the vestal virgins) allowed to look on nearer, because of the unclothed state of some of the performers in the arena. Between the ladies' boxes, benches were squeezed in where the lowest people could seat themselves; and some of these likewise found room in the two uppermost tiers of porticoes, where sailors, mechanics, and persons in the service of the Coliseum had their post. Altogether, when full, this huge building held no less than 87,000 spectators. It had no roof, but when there was rain, or if the sun was too hot, the sailors in the porticoes unfurled awnings that ran along upon ropes, and formed a covering of silk and gold tissue over the whole. Purple was the favorite color for this *velamen*, or veil; because, when the sun shone through it, it cast such beautiful rosy tints on the snowy arena and the white purple-edged togas of the Roman citizens.

Long days were spent from morning till evening upon these galleries. The multitude who poured in early would watch the great dignitaries arrive and take their seats, greeting them either with shouts of applause or

hootings of dislike, according as they were favorites or otherwise; and when the Emperor came into take his place under his canopy, there was one loud acclamation, "Joy to thee, master of all, first of all, happiest of all. Victory to thee forever!"

When the Emperor had seated himself and given the signal, the sports began. Sometimes a rope-dancing elephant would begin the entertainment, by mounting even to the summit of the building and descending by a cord. Then a bear, dressed up as a Roman matron, would be carried along in a chair between porters, as ladies were wont to go abroad, and another bear, in a lawyer's robe, would stand on his hind legs and go through the motions of pleading a cause. Or a lion came forth with a jeweled crown on his head, a diamond necklace round his neck, his mane plaited with gold, and his claws gilded, and played a hundred pretty gentle antics with a little hare that danced fearlessly within his grasp. Then in would come twelve elephants, six males in the toga, six females with the veil and pallium; they took their places on couches around an ivory table, dined with great decorum, playfully sprinkling a little rosewater over the nearest spectators, and then received more guests of their own unwieldy kind, who arrived in ball-dresses, scattered flowers, and performed a dance.

Sometimes water was let into the arena, a ship sailed in, and falling to pieces in the midst, sent a crowd of strange animals swim-

ming in all directions. Sometimes the ground opened, and trees came growing up through it, bearing golden fruit. Or the beautiful old tale of Orpheus was acted: these trees would follow the harp and song of the musician; but —to make the whole part complete—it was no mere play, but real earnest, that the Orpheus of the piece fell a prey to live bears.

For the Coliseum had not been built for such harmless spectacles as those first described. The fierce Romans wanted to be excited and feel themselves strongly stirred; and, presently, the doors of the pits and dens round the arena were thrown open, and absolutely savage beasts were let loose upon one another —rhinoceroses and tigers, bulls and lions, leopards and wild boars—while the people watched with savage curiosity to see the various kinds of attack and defense; or, if the animals were cowed or sullen, their rage would be worked up—red would be shown to bulls, white to boars, red-hot goads would be driven into some, whips would be lashed at others, till the work of slaughter was fairly commenced, and gazed on with greedy eyes, and ears delighted, instead of horror-struck, by the roars and howls of the noble creatures whose courage was thus misused. Sometimes, indeed, when some especially strong or ferocious animal had slain a whole heap of victims, the cries of the people would decree that it should be turned loose in its native forest, and, amid shouts of "A triumph!—a triumph!" the beast would prowl round the arena, upon the car-

casses of the slain victims. Almost incredible numbers of animals were imported for these cruel sports, and the governors of distant provinces made it a duty to collect troops of lions, elephants, ostriches, leopards—the fiercer or the newer the creature the better—to be thus tortured to frenzy, to make sport in the amphitheater. However, there was daintiness joined with cruelty: the Romans did not like the smell of blood, though they enjoyed the sight of it, and all the solid stonework was pierced with tubes, through which was conducted the steam of spices and saffron, boiled in wine, that the perfume might overpower the scent of slaughter below.

Wild beasts tearing each other to pieces might, one would think, satisfy any taste for horror; but the spectators needed even nobler game to be set before their favorite monsters —men were brought forward to confront them. Some of these were, at first, in full armor, and fought hard, generally with success; and there was a revolving machine, something like a squirrel's cage, in which the bear was always climbing after his enemy, and then rolling over by his own weight. Or hunters came, almost unarmed, and gaining the victory by swiftness and dexterity, throwing a piece of cloth over a lion's head, or disconcerting him by putting their fist down his throat. But it was not only skill, but death, that the Romans loved to see; and condemned criminals and deserters were reserved to feast the lions, and to entertain the populace with their various

kinds of death. Among these condemned was many a Christian martyr, who witnessed a good confession before the savage-eyed multitude around the arena, and "met the lion's gory mane" with a calm resolution and hopeful joy that the lookers-on could not understand. To see a Christian die, with upward gaze and hymns of joy on his tongue, was the most strange and unaccountable sight the Coliseum could offer, and it was therefore the choicest, and reserved for the last of the spectacles in which the brute creation had a part.

The carcasses were dragged off with hooks, the blood-stained sand was covered with a fresh clean layer, the perfume wafted in stronger clouds, and a procession came forward—tall, well-made men, in the prime of their strength. Some carried a sword and a lasso, others a trident and a net; some were in light armor, others in the full heavy equipment of a soldier; some on horseback, some in chariots, some on foot. They marched in, and made the obeisance to the Emperor; and with one voice their greeting sounded through the building, *Ave, Cæsar, morituri te salutant!* "Hail, Cæsar, those about to die salute thee!"

They were the gladiators—the swordsmen trained to fight to the death to amuse the populace. They were usually slaves placed in schools of arms under the care of a master; but sometimes persons would voluntarily hire themselves out to fight by way of a profession: and both these, and such slave-gladiators as did not die in the arena, would sometimes re-

tire, and spend an old age of quiet; but there was little hope of this, for the Romans were not apt to have mercy on the fallen.

Fights of all sorts took place—the light-armed soldier and the netsman—the lasso and the javelin—the two heavy-armed warriors all—combinations of single combat, and sometimes a general *melee*. When a gladiator wounded his adversary, he shouted to the spectators, *Hoc habet!* "He has it!" and looked up to know whether he should kill or spare. If the people held up their thumbs, the conquered was left to recover, if he could; if they turned them down, he was to die: and if he showed any reluctance to present his throat for the death-blow, there was a scornful shout, *Recipe ferrum!* "Receive the steel!" Many of us must have seen casts of that most touching statue of the wounded man, that called forth the noble lines of indignant pity which, though so often repeated, cannot be passed over here:—

"I see before me the Gladiator lie;
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony.
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low,
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

"He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away.
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,

But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday.
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire,
And unavenged? Arise ye Goths and glut your ire."

Sacred vestals, tender mothers, fat, good-humored senators, all thought it fair play, and were equally pitiless in the strange frenzy for exciting scenes to which they gave themselves up, when they mounted the stone stairs of the Coliseum. Privileged persons would even descend into the arena, examine the death-agonies and taste the blood of some specially brave victim ere the corpse was drawn forth at the death-gate, that the frightful game might continue undisturbed and unencumbered. Gladiator shows were the great passion of Rome, and popular favor could hardly be gained except by ministering to it. Even when the barbarians were beginning to close in on the Empire hosts of brave men were still kept for this slavish mimic warfare—sport to the beholders, but sad earnest to the actors.

Christianity worked its way upwards, and at last was professed by the Emperor on his throne. Persecution came to an end and no more martyrs fed the beasts in the Coliseum. The Christian Emperors endeavored to prevent any more shows where cruelty and death formed the chief interest and no truly religious person could endure the spectacle; but custom and love of excitement prevailed even against the Emperor. Mere tricks of beasts, horse

and chariot races, or bloodless contests, were tame and dull, according to the diseased taste of Rome; it was thought weak and sentimental to object to looking on at a death-scene; the Emperors were generally absent at Constantinople, and no one could get elected to any office unless he treated the citizens to such a show as they best liked, with a little bloodshed and death to stir their feelings; and thus it went on for full a hundred years after Rome had, in name, become a Christian city, and the same customs prevailed wherever there was an amphitheater and pleasure-loving people.

Meantime the enemies of Rome were coming nearer and nearer, and Alaric, the great chief of the Goths, led his forces into Italy, and threatened the city itself. Honorius, the Emperor, was a cowardly, almost idiotical, boy; but his brave general, Stilicho, assembled his forces, met the Goths at Pollentia, about twenty-five miles from where Turin now stands, and gave them a complete defeat on the Easter-day of the year 403. He pursued them into the mountains, and for that time saved Rome. In the joy of the victory the Roman senate invited the conqueror and his ward Honorius to enter the city in triumph, at the opening of the new year, with the white steeds, purple robes, and vermilion cheeks with which, of old, victorious generals were welcomed at Rome. The churches were visited instead of the Temple of Jupiter, and there was no murder of the captives; but Roman bloodthirstiness was not yet allayed, and, after

all the procession had been completed, the Coliseum shows commenced, innocently at first, with races on foot, on horseback, and in chariots; then followed a grand hunting of beasts turned loose in the arena; and next a sword-dance. But after the sword-dance came the arraying of swordsmen, with no blunted weapons, but with sharp spears and swords—a gladiator combat in full earnest. The people, enchanted, applauded with shouts of ecstasy this gratification of their savage tastes. Suddenly, however, there was an interruption. A rude roughly-robed man, bareheaded and barefooted, had sprung into the arena, and, signing back the gladiators, began to call aloud upon the people to cease from the shedding of innocent blood, and not to requite God's mercy in turning away the sword of the enemy by encouraging murder. Shouts, howls, cries, broke in upon his words; this was no place for preachings—the old customs of Rome should be observed—"Back, old man!" "On, gladiators!" The gladiators thrust aside the meddler, and rushed to the attack. He still stood between, holding them apart, striving in vain to be heard. "Sedition! sedition!"—"Down with him!"—was the cry; and the man in authority, Alypius, the prefect, himself added his voice. The gladiators, enraged at interference with their vocation, cut him down. Stones, or whatever came to hand, rained down upon him from the furious people, and he perished in the midst of the arena!

He lay dead, and then came the feeling of what had been done.

His dress showed that he was one of the hermits who vowed themselves to a holy life of prayer and self-denial, and who were greatly reverenced, even by the most thoughtless. The few who had previously seen him, told that he had come from the wilds of Asia on pilgrimage, to visit the shrines and keep his Christmas at Rome—they knew he was a holy man—no more, and it is not even certain whether his name was Alymachus or Telemachus. His spirit had been stirred by the sight of thousands flocking to see men slaughter one another, and in his simple-hearted zeal he had resolved to stop the cruelty or die. He had died, but not in vain. His work was done. The shock of such a death before their eyes turned the hearts of the people; they saw the wickedness and cruelty to which they had blindly surrendered themselves; and from the day when the hermit died in the Coliseum there was never another fight of gladiators. Not merely at Rome, but in every province of the Empire, the custom was utterly abolished; and one habitual crime at least was wiped from the earth by the self-devotion of one humble, obscure, almost nameless man.

THE SHEPHERD GIRL OF NANTERRE.

A. D. 438.

Four hundred years of the Roman dominion had entirely tamed the once wild and independent Gauls. Everywhere, except in the moorlands of Brittany, they had become as much like Romans themselves as they could accomplish; they had Latin names spoke the Latin tongue, all their personages of higher rank were enrolled as Roman citizens, their chief cities were colonies where the laws were administered by magistrates in the Roman fashion, and the houses, dress, and amusements were the same as those of Italy. The greater part of the towns had been converted to Christianity, though some Paganism still lurked in the more remote villages and mountainous districts.

It was upon these civilized Gauls that the terrible attacks came from the wild nations who poured out of the center and east of Europe. The Franks came over the Rhine and its dependent rivers, and made furious attacks upon the peaceful plains, where the Gauls had long lived in security, and reports were everywhere heard of villages harried by wild horsemen, with short doubled-headed battle-axes, and a horrible short pike covered with iron

and with several large hooks, like a gigantic artificial minnow, and like it fastened to a long rope, so that the prey which it had grappled might be pulled up to the owner. Walled cities usually stopped them, but every farm or villa outside was stripped of its valuables, set on fire, the cattle driven off, and the more healthy inhabitants seized for slaves.

It was during this state of things that a girl was born to a wealthy peasant at the village now called Nanterre, about two miles from Lutetia, which was already a prosperous city, though not as yet so entirely the capital as it was destined to become under the name of Paris. She was christened by an old Gallic name, probably Gwenfrewi, or White Stream, in Latin Genovefa, but she is best known by the late French form of Genevieve. When she was about seven years old, two celebrated bishops passed through the village, Germanus, of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes, who had been invited to Britain to dispute the false doctrines of Pelagius. All the inhabitatants flocked into the church to see them, pray with them, and receive their blessing; and here the sweet childish devotion of Genevieve so struck Germanus, that he called her to him, talked to her, made her sit beside him at the feast, gave her his special blessing, and presented her with a copper medal with a cross engraven upon it. From that time the little maiden always deemed herself especially consecrated to the service of Heaven, but she still remained at home, daily keeping her father's

sheep, and spinning their wool as she sat under the trees watching them, but always with her heart full of prayer.

After this St. Germanus proceeded to Britain, and there encouraged his converts to meet the heathen Picts at Maes Garmon, in Flintshire, where the exulting shout at the white-robed catechumens turned to flight the wild superstitious savages of the north,—and the Hallelujah victory was gained without a drop of bloodshed. He never lost sight of Genevieve, the little maid whom he had so early distinguished for her piety.

After she lost her parents she went to live with her godmother, and continued the same simple habits, leading a life of sincere devotion and strict self-denial, constant prayer and much charity to her poorer neighbors.

In the year 451 the whole of Gaul was in the most dreadful state of terror at the advance of Attila, the savage chief of the Huns, who came from the banks of the Danube with a host of savages of hideous features, scarred and disfigured to render them more frightful. The old enemies, the Goths and the Franks, seemed like friends compared with these formidable beings, whose cruelties were said to be intolerable, and of whom every exaggerated story was told that could add to the horrors of the miserable people who lay in their path. Tidings came that this "Scourge of God," as Attila called himself, had passed the Rhine, destroyed Tongres and Metz, and was in full march for Paris. The whole country

was in the utmost terror. Every one seized their most valuable possessions, and would have fled; but Genevieve placed herself on the only bridge across the Seine, and argued with them, assuring them, in a strain that was afterwards thought of as prophetic, that, if they would pray, repent, and defend instead of abandoning their homes, God would protect them. They were at first almost ready to stone her for thus withstanding their panic, but just then a priest arrived from Auxerre, with a present for Genevieve from St. Germanus, and they were thus reminded of the high estimation in which he held her; they became ashamed of their violence, and she led them back to pray and to arm themselves. In a few days they heard that Attila had paused to besiege Orleans, and that Aetius, the Roman general, hurrying from Italy, had united his troops with those of the Goths and Franks, and given Attila so terrible a defeat at Chalons that the Huns were fairly driven out of Gaul. And here it must be mentioned that when the next year, 452, Attila with his murderous host, came down into Italy, and after horrible devastation of all the northern provinces, came to the gates of Rome. No one dared to meet him but one venerable Bishop, Leo, the Pope, who, when his flock were in transports of despair, went forth only accompanied by one magistrate to meet the invader, and endeavored to turn his wrath aside. The savage Huns were struck with awe by the fearless majesty of the unarmed

old man. They conducted him safely to Attila, who listened to him with respect, and promised not to lead his people into Rome, provided a tribute should be paid to him. He then retreated, and, to the joy of all Europe, died on his way back to his native dominions.

But with the Huns the danger and suffering of Europe did not end. The happy state described in the Prophets as "dwelling safely, with none to make them afraid," was utterly unknown in Europe throughout the long break-up of the Roman Empire; and in a few more years the Franks were overrunning the banks of the Seine, and actually venturing to lay siege to the Roman walls of Paris itself. The fortifications were strong enough, but hunger began to do the work of the besiegers, and the garrison, unwarlike and untrained, began to despair. But Genevieve's courage and trust never failed; and finding no warriors willing to run the risk of going beyond the walls to obtain food for the women and children who were perishing around them, this brave shepherdess embarked alone in a little boat, and guiding it down the stream, landed beyond the Frankish camp, and repairing to the different Gallic cities, she implored them to send succor to their famished brethren. She obtained complete success. Probably the Franks had no means of obstructing the passage of the river, so that a convoy of boats could easily penetrate into the town, and at any rate they looked upon Genevieve as something sacred and inspired, whom they durst not

touch; probably as one of the battle-maids in whom their own myths taught them to believe. One account indeed says that, instead of going alone to obtain help, Genevieve placed herself at the head of a forage party, and that the mere sight of her inspired bearing caused them to be allowed to enter and return in safety; but the boat version seems the more probable, since a single boat on the broad river would more easily elude the enemy than a troop of Gauls pass through their army.

But a city where all the valor resided in one woman could not long hold out, and in another inroad, when Genevieve was absent, Paris was actually seized by the Franks. Their leader, Hilperik, was absolutely afraid of what the mysterious brave maiden might do to him, and commanded the gates of the city to be carefully guarded lest she should enter; but Genevieve learnt that some of the chief citizens were imprisoned, and that Hilperik intended their death, and nothing could withhold her from making an effort in their behalf. The Franks had made up their minds to settle and not to destroy. They were not burning and slaying indiscriminately, but while despising the Romans, as they called the Gauls, for their cowardice, they were in awe of their superior civilization and knowledge of arts. The country people had free access to the city, and Genevieve in her homely gown and veil passed by Hilperik's guards without being suspected of being more than an ordinary Gaulish village-maid; and thus she fearlessly made her

way, even to the old Roman halls, where the long-haired Hilperik was holding his wild carousal. Would that we knew more of that interview—one of the most striking that ever took place! We can only picture to ourselves the Roman tesselated pavement bestrewn with wine, bones, and fragments of the barbarous revelry. There were untamed Franks, their sun-burnt hair tied up in a knot at the top of their heads, and falling down like a horse's tail, their faces close-shaven, except two huge mustaches, and dressed in tight leather garments, with swords at their wide belts. Some slept, some feasted, some greased their long locks, some shouted out their favorite war-songs around the table, which was covered with the spoils of Churches, and at their head sat the wild, long-haired chieftain, who was a few years later driven away by his own followers for his excesses,—the whole scene was all that was abhorrent to a pure, devout, and faithful nature, most full of terror to a woman. Yet there, in her strength, stood the peasant maiden, her heart full of trust and pity, her looks full of the power that is given by fearlessness of them that can kill the body. What she said we do not know—we only know that the barbarous Hilperik was overawed; he trembled before the expostulations of the brave woman, and granted all she asked—the safety of his prisoners, and mercy to the terrified inhabitants. No wonder that the people of Paris have ever since looked back to Genevieve as

their protectress, and that in after-ages she has grown to be the patron saint of the city.

She lived to see the son of Hilperik, Chlodweh, or, as he was more commonly called, Clovis, marry a Christian wife, Clotilda, and after a time become a Christian. She saw the foundation of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and of the two famous Churches of St. Denys and of St. Martin of Tours, and gave her full share to the first efforts for bringing the rude and bloodthirsty conquerors to some knowledge of Christian faith, mercy, and purity. After a life of constant prayer and charity she died, three months after King Clovis, in the year 512, the 89th of her age.*

* Perhaps the exploits of the Maid of Orleans were the most like those of Genevieve, but they are not here added to our collection of "Golden Deeds," because the Maid's belief that she was directly inspired removes them from the ordinary class. Alas! the English did not treat her as Hilperik treated Genevieve.

LEO THE SLAVE.

A.D. 533.

The Franks had fully gained possession of all the north of Gaul, except Brittany. Chlodweh had made them Christians in name, but they still remained horribly savage—and the life of the Gauls under them was wretched. The Burgundians and Visigoths who had peopled the southern and eastern provinces were far from being equally violent. They had entered on their settlements on friendly terms, and even showed considerable respect for the Roman-Gallic senators, magistrates, and higher clergy, who all remained unmolested in their dignities and riches. Thus it was that Gregory, Bishop of Langres, was a man of high rank and consideration in the Burgundian kingdom, whence the Christian Queen Clotilda had come; and even after the Burgundians had beeen subdued by the four sons of Chlodweh, he continued a rich and prosperous man.

After one of the many quarrels and reconciliations between these fierce brethren, there was an exchange of hostages for the observance of the terms of the treaty. These were not taken from among the Franks, who were too proud to submit to captivity, but from

among the Gaulish nobles, a much more convenient arrangement to the Frankish kings, who cared for the life of a "Roman" infinitely less than even for the life of a Frank. Thus many young men of senatorial families were exchanged between the domains of Theodrik to the south, and of Hildebert to the northward, and quartered among Frankish chiefs, with whom at first they had nothing more to endure than the discomfort of living as guests with such rude and coarse barbarians. But ere long fresh quarrels broke out between Theodrik and Hildebert, and the unfortunate hostages were at once turned into slaves. Some of them ran away if they were near the frontier, but Bishop Gregory was in the utmost anxiety about his young nephew Attalus, who had been last heard of as being placed under the charge of a Frank who lived between Treves and Metz. The Bishop sent emissaries to make secret inquiries, and they brought word that the unfortunate youth had indeed been reduced to slavery, and was made to keep his master's herds of horses. Upon this the uncle again sent off his messengers with presents for the ransom of Attalus, but the Frank rejected them, saying, "One of such high race can only be redeemed for ten pounds, weight of gold."

This was beyond the Bishop's means, and while he was considering how to raise the sum, the slaves were all lamenting for their young lord, to whom they were much attached, till one of them, named Leo, the cook to the

household, came to the Bishop, saying to him, "If thou wilt give me leave to go, I will deliver him from captivity." The Bishop replied that he gave free permission, and the slave set off for Treves, and there watched anxiously for an opportunity of gaining access to Attalus; but though the poor young man—no longer daintily dressed, bathed, and perfumed, but ragged and squalid—might be seen following his herds of horses, he was too well watched for any communication to be held with him. Then Leo went to a person, probably of Gallic birth, and said, "Come with me to this barbarian's house, and there sell me for a slave. Thou shalt have the money, I only ask thee to help me thus far."

Both repaired to the Frank's abode, the chief among a confused collection of clay and timber huts intended for shelter during eating and sleeping. The Frank looked at the slave, and asked him what he could do.

"I can dress whatever is eaten at lordly tables," replied Leo. "I am afraid of no rival; I only tell thee the truth when I say that if thou wouldst give a feast to the king, I could send it up in the neatest manner."

"Ha!" said the barbarian, "the Sun's day is coming—I shall invite my kinsmen and friends. Cook me such a dinner as may amaze them, and make them say, 'We saw nothing better in the king's house.'"

"Let me have plenty of poultry, and I will do according to my master's bidding," returned Leo.

Accordingly, he was purchased for twelve gold pieces, and on the Sunday (as Bishop Gregory of Tours, who tells the story, explains that the barbarians called the Lord's day) he produced a banquet after the most approved Roman fashion, much to the surprise and delight of the Franks, who had never tasted such delicacies before, and complimented their host upon them all the evening. Leo gradually became a great favorite, and was placed in authority over the other slaves, to whom he gave out their daily portions of broth and meat; but from the first he had not shown any recognition of Attalus, and had signed to him that they must be strangers to one another. A whole year had passed away in this manner, when one day Leo wandered, as if for pastime, into the plain where Attalus was watching the horses, and sitting down on the ground at some paces off, and with his back toward his young master, so that they might not be seen talking together, he said, "This is the time for thoughts of home! When thou hast led the horses to the stable to-night, sleep not. Be ready at the first call!"

That day the Frank lord was entertaining a large number of guests, among them his daughter's husband, a jovial young man, given to jesting. On going to rest he fancied he should be thirsty at night, and called Leo to set a pitcher of hydromel by his bedside. As the slave was setting it down, the Frank looked slyly from under his eyelids, and said in joke, "Tell me, my father-in-law's trusty

man, wilt not thou some night take one of those horses, and run away to thine own home?"

"Please God, it is what I mean to do this very night," answered the Gaul, so undauntedly that the Frank took it as a jest, and answered, "I shall look out then that thou dost not carry off anything of mine," and then Leo left him, both laughing.

All were soon asleep, and the cook crept out to the stable, where Attalus usually slept among the horses. He was broad awake now, and ready to saddle the two swiftest; but he had no weapon except a small lance, so Leo boldly went back to his master's sleeping hut, and took down his sword and shield, but not without awaking him enough to ask who was moving. "It is I—Leo," was the answer, "I have been to call Attalus to take out the horses early. He sleeps as hard as a drunkard." The Frank went to sleep again, quite satisfied, and Leo, carrying out the weapons, soon made Attalus feel like a free man and a noble once more. They passed unseen out of the enclosure, mounted their horses, and rode along the great Roman road from Treves as far as the Meuse, but they found the bridge guarded, and were obliged to wait till night, when they cast their horses loose and swam the river, supporting themselves on boards that they found on the bank. They had as yet had no food since the supper at their master's, and were thankful to find a plum-tree in the wood, with fruit, to refresh them in some degree, before

they lay down for the night. The next morning they went on in the direction of Rheims, carefully listening whether there were any sounds behind, until, on the broad hard-paved causeway, they actually heard the trampling of horses. Happily a bush was near, behind which they crept, with their naked swords before them, and here the riders actually halted for a few moments to arrange their harness. Men and horses were both those they feared, and they trembled at hearing one say, "Woe is me that those rogues have made off, and have not been caught! On my salvation, if I catch them, I will have one hung and the other chopped into little bits!" It was no small comfort to hear the trot of the horses resumed, and soon dying away in the distance. That same night the two faint, hungry, weary travelers, footsore and exhausted, came stumbling into Rheims, looking about for some person still awake to tell them the way to the house of the Priest Paul, a friend of Attalus' uncle. They found it just as the Church bell was ringing for matins, a sound that must have seemed very like home to these members of an episcopal household. They knocked, and in the morning twilight met the priest going to his earliest Sunday morning service.

Leo told his young master's name and how they had escaped, and the priest's first exclamation was a strange one: "My dream is true. This very night I saw two doves, one white and one black, who came and perched on my hand."

The good man was over-joyed, but he scrupled to give them any food, as it was contrary to the Church's rules for the fast to be broken before mass; but the travelers were half-dead with hunger, and could only say, "The good Lord pardon us, for, saving the respect due to His day, we must eat something, since this is the fourth day since we have touched bread or meat." The priest upon this gave them some bread and wine, and after hiding them carefully, went to Church, hoping to avert suspicion; but their master was already at Rheims, making strict search for them, and learning that Paul the priest was a friend of the Bishop of Langres, he went to Church, and there questioned him closely. But the priest succeeded in guarding his secret, and though he incurred much danger, as the Salic law was very severe against concealers of runaway slaves, he kept Attalus and Leo for two days, till the search was blown over, and their strength was restored, so that they could proceed to Langres. There they were welcomed like men risen from the dead; the Bishop wept on the neck of Attalus, and was ready to receive Leo as a slave no more, but a friend and deliverer.

A few days after Leo was solemnly led to the Church. Every door was set open as a sign that he might henceforth go whithersoever he would. Bishop Gregorius took him by the hand, and, standing before the Archdeacon, declared that for the sake of the good services rendered by his slave, Leo, he set him free, and created him a Roman citizen.

Then the Archdeacon read a writing of manumission. "Whatever is done according to the Roman law is irrevocable. According to the constitution of the Emperor Constantine, of happy memory, and the edict that declares that whosoever is manumitted in Church, in the presence of the bishops, priests, and deacons, shall become a Roman citizen under protection of the Church: from this day Leo becomes a member of the city, free to go and come where he will as if he had been born of free parents. From this day forward, he is exempt from all subjection of servitude, of all duty of a freed-man, all bond of clientship. He is and shall be free, with full and entire freedom, and shall never cease to belong to the body of Roman citizens."

At the same time Leo was endowed with lands, which raised him to the rank of what the Franks called a Roman proprietor—the highest reward in the Bishop's power for the faithful devotion that had incurred such dangers in order to rescue the young Attalus from his miserable bondage.

Somewhat of the same kind of faithfulness was shown early in the present century by Ivan Simonoff, a soldier servant belonging to Major Kascambo, an officer in the Russian army, who was made prisoner by one of the wild tribes of the Caucasus. But though the soldier's attachment to his master was quite as brave and disinterested as that of the Gallic slave, yet he was far from being equally blameless in the means he employed, and if his were a

golden deed at all, it was mixed with much of iron.

Major Kascambo, with a guard of fifty Cossacks, was going to take the command of the Russian outpost of Lars, one of the forts by which the Russian Czars have slowly been carrying on the aggressive warfare that has nearly absorbed into their vast dominions all the mountains between the Caspian and Black Seas. On his way he was set upon by seven hundred horsemen of the savage and independent tribe of Tchetchenges. There was a sharp fight, more than half his men were killed, and he with the rest made a rampart of the carcasses of their horses, over which they were about to fire their last shots, when the Tchetchenges made a Russian deserter call out to the Cossacks that they would let them all escape provided they would give up their officer. Kascambo on this came forward and delivered himself into their hands; while the remainder of the troops galloped off. His servant, Ivan, with a mule carrying his baggage, had been hidden in a ravine, and now, instead of retreating with the Cossacks, came to join his master. All the baggage was, however, instantly seized and divided among the Tchetchenges; nothing was left but a guitar, which they threw scornfully to the Major. He would have let it lie, but Ivan picked it up, and insisted on keeping it. "Why be dispirited?" he said; "the God of the Russians is great, it is the interest of the robbers to save you, they will do you no harm."

Scouts brought word that the Russian outposts were alarmed, and that troops were assembling to rescue the officer. Upon this the seven hundred broke up into small parties, leaving only ten men on foot to conduct the prisoners, whom they forced to take off their iron-shod boots and walk barefoot over stones and thorns, till the Major was so exhausted that they were obliged to drag him by cords fastened to his belt.

After a terrible journey, the prisoners were placed in a remote village, where the Major had heavy chains fastened to his hands and feet, and another to his neck, with a huge block of oak as a clog at the other end; they half-starved him, and made him sleep on the bare ground of the hut in which he was lodged. The hut belonged to a huge, fierce old man of sixty, named Ibrahim, whose son had been killed in a skirmish with the Russians. This man, together with his son's widow, were continually trying to revenge themselves on their captive. The only person who showed him any kindness was his little grandson, a child of seven years old, called Mamet, who often caressed him, and brought him food by stealth. Ivan was also in the same hut, but less heavily ironed than his master, and able to attempt a few alleviations for his wretched condition. An interpreter brought the Major a sheet of paper and a reed pen, and commanded him to write to his friends that he might be ransomed for 10,000 roubles, but that if the whole sum were not

paid, he would be put to death. He obeyed, but he knew that his friends could not possibly raise such a sum, and his only hope was in the government, which had once ransomed a colonel who had fallen into the hands of the same tribe.

These Tchetchenges professed to be Mahometans, but their religion sat very loose upon them, and they were utter barbarians. One piece of respect they paid the Major's superior education was curious—they made him judge in all the disputes that arose. The houses in the village were hollowed out under ground, and the walls only raised three or four feet, and then covered by a flat roof, formed of beaten clay, where the inhabitants spent much of their time. Kascambo was every now and then brought, in all his chains, to the roof of the hut, which served as a tribunal whence he was expected to dispense justice. For instance, a man had commissioned his neighbor to pay five roubles to a person in another valley, but the messenger's horse having died by the way, a claim was set up to the roubles to make up for it. Both parties collected all their friends, and a bloody quarrel was about to take place, when they agreed to refer the question to the prisoner, who was accordingly set upon his judgment seat.

"Pray," said he, "if, instead of giving you five roubles, your comrade had desired you to carry his greetings to his creditor, would not your horse have died all the same?"

"Most likely."

"Then what should you have done with the greetings? Should you have kept them in compensation? My sentence is that you give back the roubles, and that your comrade gives you a greeting."

The whole assembly approved the decision, and the man only grumbled out, as he gave back the money, "I knew I should lose it, if that dog of a Christian meddled with it."

All this respect, however, did not avail to procure any better usage for the unfortunate judge, whose health was suffering severely under his privations. Ivan, however, had recommended himself in the same way as Leo, by his perfections as a cook, and moreover he was a capital buffoon. His fetters were sometimes taken off that he might divert the villagers by his dances and strange antics while his master played the guitar. Sometimes they sang Russian songs together to the instrument, and on these occasions the major's hands were released that he might play on it; but one day he was unfortunately heard playing in his chains for his own amusement, and from that time he was never released from his fetters.

In the course of a year, three urgent letters had been sent; but no notice was taken of them, and Ivan began to despair of aid from home, and set himself to work. His first step was to profess himself a Mahometan. He durst not tell his master till the deed was done, and then Kascambo was infinitely shocked; but the act did not procure Ivan so much freedom as he had hoped. He was, indeed, no

longer in chains, but he was evidently distrusted, and was so closely watched, that the only way in which he could communicate with his master was when they were set to sing together, when they chanted out question and answer in Russ, unsuspected, to the tune of their national airs. He was taken on an expedition against the Russians, and very nearly killed by the suspicious Tchetchenges on one side, and by the Cossacks on the other, as a deserter. He saved a young man of the tribe from drowning; but though he thus earned the friendship of the family, the rest of the villagers hated and dreaded him all the more, since he had not been able to help proving himself a man of courage, instead of the feeble buffoon he had tried to appear.

Three months after this expedition, another took place; but Ivan was not allowed even to know of it. He saw preparations making, but nothing was said to him; only one morning he found the village entirely deserted by all the younger men, and as he wandered round it, the aged ones would not speak to him. A child told him that his father meant to kill him, and on the roof of her house stood the sister of the man he had saved, making signals of great terror, and pointing towards Russia. Home he went, and found that, besides old Ibrahim, his master was watched by a warrior, who had been prevented by an intermitting fever from joining the expedition. He was convinced that if the tribe returned unsuccessful, the murder of both himself and his

master was certain; but he resolved not to fly alone, and as he busied himself in preparing the meal, he sung the burden of a Russian ballad, intermingled with words of encouragement for his master:—

The time is come;
Hai Luli!
The time is come,
Hai Luli!
Our woe is at end,
Hai Luli!
Or we die at once!
Hai Luli!
To-morrow, to-morrow,
Hai Luli!
He are off for a town,
Hai Luli!
From a fine, fine town,
Hai Luli!
But I name no names,
Hai Luli!
Courage, courage, master dear,
Hai Luli!
Never, never despair,
Hai Luli!
For the God of the Russians is great,
Hai Luli!

Poor Kascambo, broken down, sick, and despairing, only muttered, "Do as you please, only hold your peace."

Ivan's cookery incited the additional guard to eat so much supper, that he brought on a severe attack of his fever, and was obliged to go home; but old Ibrahim, instead of going to bed, sat down on a log of wood opposite the prisoner, and seemed resolved to watch him all night. The woman and child went to bed

in the inner room, and Ivan signed to his master to take the guitar, and began to dance. The old man's ax was in an open cupboard at the other end of the room, and after many gambols and contortions, during which the Major could hardly control his fingers to touch the strings, Ivan succeeded in laying his hand upon it, just when the old man was bending over the fire to mend it. Then, as Ibrahim desired that the music should cease, he cut him down with a single blow, on his own hearth. And the daughter-in-law coming out to see what had happened, he slew her with the same weapon. And then, alas! in spite of the commands, entreaties, and cries of his master, he dashed into the inner room, and killed the sleeping child, lest it should give the alarm. Kascambo, utterly helpless to save, fell almost fainting upon the bloody floor, and did not cease to reproach Ivan, who was searching the old man's pockets for the key of the fetters, but it was not there, nor anywhere else in the hut, and the irons were so heavy that escape was impossible in them. Ivan at last knocked off the clog and the chains on the wrist with the ax, but he could not break the chains round the legs, and could only fasten them as close as he could to hinder them clanking. Then securing all the provisions he could carry, and putting his master into his military cloak, obtaining also a pistol and dagger, they crept out, but not on a direct road. It was February, and the ground was covered with snow. All night they walked easily, but at noon the

sun so softened it that they sank in at every step, and the Major's chains rendered each motion terrible labor. It was only on the second night that Ivan, with his ax, succeeded in breaking through the fastenings, and by that time the Major's legs were so swollen and stiffened that he could not move without extreme pain. However, he was dragged on through the wild mountain paths, and then over the plains for several days more, till they were on the confines of another tribe of Tchetchenges, who were overawed by Russia, and in a sort of unwilling alliance. Here, however, a sharp storm, and a fall into the water, completely finished Kascambo's strength, and he sank down on the snow, telling Ivan to go home and explain his fate, and give his last message to his mother.

"If you perish here," said Ivan, "trust me, neither your mother nor mine will ever see me."

He covered his master with his cloak, gave him the pistol, and walked on to a hut, where he found a Tchetchenge man, and told him that here was a means of obtaining two hundred roubles. He had only to shelter the Major as a guest for three days, whilst Ivan himself went on to Mosdok, to procure the money, and bring back help for his master. The man was full of suspicion, but Ivan prevailed, and Kascambo was carried into the village nearly dying, and was very ill all the time of his servant's absence. Ivan set off for the nearest Russian station, where he found some of the Cossacks who had been present when

the Major was taken. All eagerly subscribed to raise the two hundred roubles, but the Colonel would not let Ivan go back alone, as he had engaged to do, and sent a guard of Cossacks. This had nearly been fatal to the Major, for as soon as his host saw the lances, he suspected treachery, and dragging his poor sick guest to the roof of the house, he tied him up to a stake, and stood over him with a pistol, shouting to Ivan, "If you come nearer, I shall blow his brains out, and I have fifty cartridges more for my enemies, and the traitor who leads them."

"No traitor!" cried Ivan. "Here are the roubles. I have kept my word!"

"Let the Cossacks go back, or I shall fire."

Kascambo himself begged the officer to retire, and Ivan went back with the detachment, and returned alone. Even then the suspicious host made him count out the roubles at a hundred paces from the house, and at once ordered him out of sight; but then went up to the roof, and asked the Major's pardon for all this rough usage.

"I shall only recollect that you were my host, and kept your word," said Kascambo.

In a few hours more, Kascambo was in safety among his brother-officers. Ivan was made a non-commissioned officer, and some months after was seen by the traveler who told the story, whistling the air of Hai Luli at his former master's wedding-feast. He was even then scarcely twenty years old, and peculiarly quiet and soft in manners.

THE BATTLE OF THE BLACKWATER.

991.

In the evil days of King Ethelred the Unready, when the teaching of good King Alfred was fast fading away from the minds of his descendants, and self-indulgence was ruining the bold and hardy habits of the English, the fleet was allowed to fall into decay, and Danish ships again ventured to appear on the English coasts.

The first Northmen who had ravaged England came eager for blood and plunder, and hating the sight of a Christian church as an insult to their gods, Thor and Odin; but the lapse of a hundred years had in some degree changed the temper of the North; and though almost every young man thought it due to his fame to have sailed forth as a sea-rover, yet the attacks of these marauders might be bought off, and, provided they had treasure to show for their voyage, they were willing to spare the lives and lands of the people of the coasts they visited.

King Ethelred and his cowardly, selfish Court were well satisfied with this expedient, and the tax called Danegeld was laid upon the people, in order to raise a fund for buying off the enemy. But there were still in England

men of bolder and truer hearts, who held that bribery was false policy, merely inviting the enemy to come again and again, and that the only wise course would be in driving them back by English valor, and keeping the fleet in a condition to repel the "Long Serpent" ships before the foe could set foot upon the coast.

Among those who held this opinion was Brythnoth, Earl of Essex. He was of partly Danish descent himself, but had become a thorough Englishman, and had long and faithfully served the King and his father. He was a friend to the clergy, a founder of churches and convents, and his manor-house of Hadleigh was a home of hospitality and charity. It would probably be a sort of huge farm-yard, full of great barn-like buildings and sheds, all one story high; some of them serving for storehouses, and others for living-rooms and places of entertainment for his numerous servants and retainers, and for the guests of all degrees who gathered round him as the chief dispenser of justice in his East-Saxon earldom. When he heard the advice given and accepted that the Danes should be bribed, instead of being fought with, he made up his mind that he, at least, would try to raise up a nobler spirit, and, at the sacrifice of his own life, would show the effect of making a manful stand against them.

He made his will, and placed it in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and then, retiring to Hadleigh, he provided horses and

arms, and caused all the young men in his earldom to be trained in warlike exercises, according to the good old English law, that every man should be provided with weapons, and know the use of them.

The Danes sailed forth, in the year 991, with ninety-three vessels, the terrible "Long Serpents," carved with snakes' heads at the prow, and the stern finished as the gilded tail of the reptile; and many a lesser ship, meant for carrying plunder. The Sea King, Olaf (or Anlaff), was the leader; and as tidings came that their sails had been seen upon the North Sea, more earnest than ever rang out the petition in the Litany, "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord, deliver us."

Sandwich and Ipswich made no defense, and were plundered; and the fleet then sailed into the mouth of the river Blackwater, as far as Maldon, where the ravagers landed, and began to collect spoil. When, however, they came back to their ships, they found that the tide would not yet serve them to re-embark; and upon the farther bank of the river bristled the spears of a body of warriors, drawn up in battle array, but in numbers far inferior to their own.

Anlaff sent a messenger over the wooden bridge that crossed the river, to the Earl, who, he understood, commanded this small army. The brave old man, his gray hair hanging down beneath his helmet, stood, sword in hand, at the head of his warriors.

"Lord Earl," said the messenger, "I come

to bid thee to yield to us thy treasure, for thy safety. Buy off the fight, and we will ratify a peace with gold."

"Hear, O thou sailor!" was Brythnoth's answer, "the reply of this people. Instead of Danegeld, thou shalt have from them the edge of the sword, and the point of the spear. Here stands an English Earl, who will defend his earldom and the lands of his King. Point and edge shall judge between us."

Back went the Dane with his message to Anlaff, and the fight began around the bridge, where the Danes long strove to force their way across, but were always driven back by the gallant East-Saxons. The tide had risen, and for some time the two armies only shot at one another with bows and arrows; but when it ebbed, leaving the salt-marshes dry, the stout old Earl's love of fair-play overpowered his prudence, and he sent to offer the enemy a free passage, and an open field in which to measure their strength.

The numbers were too unequal; but the battle was long and bloody before the English could be overpowered Brythnoth slew one of the chief Danish leaders with his own hand, but not without receiving a wound. He was still able to fight on, though with ebbing strength and failing numbers. His hand was pierced by a dart; but a young boy at his side instantly withdrew it, and, launching it back again, slew the foe who had aimed it. Another Dane, seeing the Earl faint and sinking, advanced to plunder him of his ring and jew-

eled weapons; but he still had strength to lay the spoiler low with his battle-ax. This was his last blow; he gathered his strength for one last cheer to his brave men, and then, sinking on the ground, he looked up to heaven, exclaiming: "I thank thee, Lord of nations, for all the joys I have known on earth. Now, O mild Creator! have I the utmost need that Thou shouldst grant grace unto my soul, that my spirit may speed to Thee with peace, O King of angels! to pass into Thy keeping. I sue to Thee that Thou suffer not the rebel spirits of hell to vex my parting soul!"

With these words he died; but an aged follower, of like spirit, stood over his corpse, and exhorted his fellows. "Our spirit shall be the hardier, and our soul the greater, the fewer our numbers become!" he cried. "Here lies our chief, the brave, the good, the much-loved lord, who has blessed us with many a gift. Old as I am, I will not yield, but avenge his death, or lay me at his side. Shame befall him that thinks to fly from such a field as this!"

Nor did the English warriors fly. Night came down, at last, upon the battle-field, and saved the lives of the few survivors; but they were forced to leave the body of their lord, and the Danes bore away with them his head as a trophy, and with it, alas! ten thousand pounds of silver from the King, who, in his sluggishness and weakness, had left Brythnoth to fight and die unaided for the cause of the whole nation. One of the retainers, a minstrel in

the happy old days of Hadleigh, who had done his part manfully in the battle, had heard these last goodly sayings of his master, and, living on to peaceful days, loved to rehearse them to the sound of his harp, and well on the glories of one who could die, but not be defeated.

Ere those better days had come, another faithful-hearted Englishman had given his life for his people. In the year 1012, a huge army, called, from their leader, "Thorkill's Host," were overrunning Kent, and besieging Canterbury. The Archbishop Ælfeg was earnestly entreated to leave the city while yet there was time to escape; but he replied, "None but a hireling would leave his flock in time of danger;" and he supported the resolution of the inhabitants, so that they held out the city for twenty days; and as the wild Danes had very little chance against a well-walled town, they would probably have saved it, had not the gates been secretly opened to them by the traitorous Abbot Ælfman, whom Ælfeg had once himself saved, when accused of treason before the King.

The Danes slaughtered all whom they found in the streets, and the Archbishop's friends tried to keep him in the church, lest he should run upon his fate; but he broke from them, and, confronting the enemy, cried, "Spare the guiltless! Is there glory in shedding such blood? Turn your wrath on me! It is I who have denounced your cruelty, have ransomed and re-clad your captives." The Danes seized

upon him, and, after he had seen his cathedral burnt and his clergy slain, they threw him into a dungeon, whence he was told he could only come forth upon the payment of a heavy ransom.

His flock loved him, and would have striven to raise the sum; but, miserably used as they were by the enemy, and stripped by the exactions of the Danes, he would not consent that they should be asked for a further contribution on his account. After seven months' patience in his captivity, the Danish chiefs, who were then at Greenwich, desired him to be brought into their camp, where they had just been holding a great feast. It was Easter-eve, and the quiet of that day of calm waiting was disturbed with their songs, and shouts of drunken revelry, as the chained Archbishop was led to the open space where the warriors sat and lay amid the remains of their rude repast. The leader then told him that they had agreed to let him off for his own share with a much smaller payment than had been demanded, provided he would obtain a largesse for them from the King, his master.

"I am not the man," he answered, "to provide Christian flesh for Pagan wolves;" and when again they repeated the demand, "Gold I have none to offer you, save the true wisdom of the knowledge of the living God." And he began, as he stood in the midst, to "reason to them of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come."

They were mad with rage and drink. The

old man's voice was drowned with shouts of "Gold, Bishop—give us gold!" The bones and cups that lay around were hurled at him, and he fell to the ground, with the cry, "O Chief Shepherd, guard Thine own children!" As he partly raised himself, axes were thrown at him; and, at last, a Dane, who had begun to love and listen to him in his captivity, deemed it mercy to give him a death-blow with an ax. The English maintained that Ælfeg had died to save his flock from cruel extortion, and held him as a saint and martyr, keeping his death-day (the 19th of April) as a holiday; and when the Italian Archbishop of Canterbury (Lanfranc) disputed his right to be so esteemed, there was strong opposition and discontent. Indeed, our own Prayer-book still retains his name, under the altered form of St. Alphege; and surely no one better merits to be remembered, for having loved his people far better than himself.

GUZMAN EL BUENO.

1293.

In the early times of Spanish history, before the Moors had been expelled from the peninsula, or the blight of Western gold had enervated the nation, the old honor and loyalty of the Gothic race were high and pure, fostered by constant combats with a generous enemy. The Spanish Arabs were indeed the flower of the Mahometan races, endowed with the vigor and honor of the desert tribes, yet capable of culture and civilization, excelling all other nations of their time in science and art, and almost the equals of their Christian foes in the attributes of chivalry. Wars with them were a constant crusade, consecrated in the minds of the Spaniards as being in the cause of religion, and yet in some degree freed from savagery and cruelty by the respect exacted by the honorable character of the enemy, and by the fact that the civilization and learning of the Christian kingdoms were far more derived from the Moors than from the kindred nations of Europe.

By the close of the thirteenth century, the Christian kingdoms of Castille and Aragon were descending from their mountain fastnesses, and spreading over the lovely plains of

the South, even to the Mediterranean coast, as one beautiful Moorish city after another yielded to the persevering advances of the children of the Goths; and in 1291 the nephew of our own beloved Eleanor of Castille, Sancho V., called El Bravo, ventured to invest the city of Tarifa.

This was the western buttress of the gate of the Mediterranean, the base of the northern Pillar of Hercules, and esteemed one of the gates of Spain. By it five hundred years previously had the Moorish enemy first entered Spain at the summons of Count Julian, under their leader Tarif-abu-Zearah, whose name was bestowed upon it in remembrance of his landing there. The form of the ground is said to be like a broken punch-bowl, with the broken part towards the sea. The Moors had fortified the city with a surrounding wall and twenty-six towers, and had built a castle with a lighthouse on a small adjacent island, called Isla Verde, which they had connected with the city by a causeway. Their fortifications, always admirable, have existed ever since, and in 1811, another five hundred years after, were successfully defended against the French by a small force of British troops under the command of Colonel Hugh Gough, better known in his old age as the victor of Aliwal. The walls were then unable to support the weight of artillery, for which, of course, they had never been built, but were perfectly effective against escalade.

For six months King Sancho besieged Tarifa

by land and sea, his fleet, hired from the Genoese, lying in the waters where the battle of Trafalgar was to be fought. The city at length yielded under stress of famine, but the king feared that he had no resources to enable him to keep it, and intended to dismantle and forsake it, when the Grand Master of the military order of Calatrava offered to undertake the defense with his knights for one year, hoping that some other noble would come forward at the end of that time and take the charge upon himself.

He was not mistaken. The noble who made himself responsible for this post of danger was a Leonese knight of high distinction, by name Alonzo Perez de Guzman, already called El Bueno, or "The Good," from the high qualities he had manifested in the service of the late King, Don Alonso VI., by whom he had always stood when the present king, Don Sancho, was in rebellion. The offer was readily accepted, and the whole Guzman family removed to Tarifa, with the exception of the eldest son, who was in the train of the Infant Don Juan, the second son of the late king, who had always taken part with his father against his brother, and on Sancho's accession, continued his enmity, and fled to Portugal.

The King of Portugal, however, being requested by Sancho not to permit him to remain there, he proceeded to offer his services to the King of Morocco, Yusuf-ben-Yacoub, for whom he undertook to recover Tarifa, if 5,000 horse were granted to him for the purpose.

The force would have been most disproportionate for the attack of such a city as Tarifa, but Don Juan reckoned on means that he had already found efficacious, when he had obtained the surrender of Zamora to his father by threatening to put to death a child of the lady in command of the fortress.

Therefore, after summoning Tarifa at the head of his 5,000 Moors, he led forth before the gates the boy who had been confided to his care, and declared that unless the city were yielded instantly, Guzman should behold the death of his own son at his hand! Before, he had had to deal witha weak woman on a question of divided allegiance. It was otherwise here. The point was whether the city should be made over to the enemies of the faith and country, whether the plighted word of a loyal knight should be broken. The boy was held in the grasp of the cruel prince, stretching out his hands and weeping as he saw his father upon the walls. Don Alonso's eyes, we are told, filled with tears as he cast one long, last look at his first-born, whom he might not save except at the expense of his truth and honor.

The struggle was bitter, but he broke forth at last in these words: "I did not beget a son to be made use of against my country, but that he should serve her against her foes. Should Don Juan put him to death, he will but confer honor on me, true life on my son, and on himself eternal shame in this world and everlasting wrath after death. So far am I from yielding this place or betraying my

trust, that in case he should want a weapon for his cruel purpose, there goes my knife!"

He cast the knife in his belt over the walls, and returned to the Castle, where, commanding his countenance, he sat down to table with his wife. Loud shouts of horror and dismay almost instantly called him forth again. He was told that Don Juan had been seen to cut the boy's throat in a transport of blind rage. "I thought the enemy had broken in," he calmly said, and went back again.

The Moors themselves were horror-struck at the atrocity of their ally, and as the siege was hopeless they gave it up; and Don Juan, afraid and ashamed to return to Morocco, wandered to the Court of Granada.

King Sancho was lying sick at Alcala de Henares when the tidings of the price of Guzman's fidelity reached him. Touched to the depths of his heart, he wrote a letter to his faithful subject, comparing his sacrifice to that of Abraham, confirming to him the surname of Good, lamenting his own inability to come and offer his thanks and regrets, but entreating Guzman's presence at Alcala.

All the way thither, the people thronged to see the man true to his word at such a fearful cost. The Court was sent out to meet him, and the King, after embracing him, exclaimed, "Here learn, ye knights, what are exploits of virtue. Behold your model."

Lands and honors were heaped upon Alonso de Guzman, and they were not a mockery of his loss, for he had other sons to inherit them

He was the stanch friend of Sancho's widow and son in a long and perilous minority, and died full of years and honors. The lands granted to him were those of Medina Sidonia, which lie between the rivers Guadiana and Guadalquivir, and they have ever since been held by his descendants, who still bear the honored name of Guzman, witnessing that the man who gave the life of his first-born rather than break his faith to the king has left a posterity as noble and enduring as any family in Europe.

FAITHFUL TILL DEATH.

1308.

One of the ladies most admired by the ancient Romans was Arria, the wife of Cæcina Pætus, a Roman who was condemned by the Emperor Claudius to become his own executioner. Seeing him waver, his wife, who was resolved to be with him in death as in life, took the dagger from his hand, plunged it into her own breast, and with her last strength held it out to him, gasping out, "It is not painful, my Pætus."

Such was the heathen faithfulness even to death; and where the teaching of Christianity had not forbidden the taking away of life by one's own hand, perhaps wifely love could not go higher. Yet Christian women have endured a yet more fearful ordeal to their tender affection, watching, supporting, and finding unfailing fortitude to uphold the sufferer in agonies that must have rent their hearts.

Natalia was the fair young wife of Adrian, an officer at Nicomedia, in the guards of the Emperor Galerius Maximianus, and only about twenty-eight years old. Natalia was a Christian, but her husband remained a pagan, until, when he was charged with the execution of some martyrs, their constancy, coupled with

the testimony of his own wife's virtues, triumphed over his unbelief, and he confessed himself likewise a Christian. He was thrown into prison, and sentenced to death, but he prevailed on his jailer to permit him to leave the dungeon for a time, that he might see his wife. The report came to Natalia that he was no longer in prison, and she threw herself on the ground, lamenting aloud: "Now will men point at me, and say, 'Behold the wife of the coward and apostate, who, for fear of death, hath denied his God.'"

"Oh, thou noble and strong-hearted woman," said Adrian's voice at the door, "I bless God that I am not unworthy of thee. Open the door that I may bid thee farewell."

But this was not the last farewell, though he duly went back to the prison; for when, the next day, he had been cruelly scourged and tortured before the tribunal, Natalia, with her hair cut short, and wearing the disguise of a youth, was there to tend and comfort him. She took him in her arms, saying, "Oh, light of mine eyes, and husband of mine heart, blessed art thou, who art chosen to suffer for Christ's sake."

On the following day, the tyrant ordered that Adrian's limbs should be one by one struck off on a blacksmith's anvil, and lastly his head. And still it was his wife who held him and sustained him through all, and, ere the last stroke of the executioner, had received his last breath. She took up one of the severed hands, kissed it, and placed it in her

bosom, and escaping to Byzantium, there spent her life in widowhood.

Nor among these devoted wives should we pass by Gertrude, the wife of Rudolf, Baron von der Wart, a Swabian nobleman, who was so ill-advised as to join in a conspiracy of Johann of Hapsburg, in 1308, against the Emperor Albrecht I., the son of the great and good Rudolf of Hapsburg.

This Johann was the son of the Emperor's brother Rudolf, a brave knight who had died young, and Johann had been brought up by a Baron called Walther von Eschenbach, until, at nineteen years old, he went to his uncle to demand his father's inheritance. Albrecht was a rude and uncouth man, and refused disdainfully the demand, whereupon the noblemen of the disputed territory stirred up the young prince to form a plot against him, all having evidently different views of the lengths to which they would proceed. This was just at the time that the Swiss, angry at the overweening and oppressive behavior of Albrecht's governors, were first taking up arms to maintain that they owed no duty to him as Duke of Austria, but merely as Emperor of Germany. He set out on his way to chastise them as rebels, taking with him a considerable train, of whom his nephew Johann was one. At Baden, Johann, as a last experiment, again applied for his inheritance, but by way of answer, Albrecht held out a wreath of flowers, telling him they better became his years, than did the cares of government. He

burst into tears, threw the wreath upon the ground, and fed his mind upon the savage purpose of letting his uncle find out what he was fit for.

By and by, the party came to the banks of the Reuss, where there was no bridge, and only one single boat to carry the whole across. The first to cross were the Emperor with one attendant, besides his nephew and four of the secret partisans of Johann. Albrecht's son Leopold was left to follow with the rest of the suite, and the Emperor rode on toward the hills of his home, toward the Castle of Hapsburg, where his father's noble qualities had earned the reputation which was the cause of all the greatness of the line. Suddenly his nephew rode up to him, and while one of the conspirators seized the bridle of his horse, exclaimed, "Will you now restore my inheritance?" and wounded him in the neck. The attendant fled; Der Wart, who had never thought murder was to be a part of the scheme, stood aghast, but the other two fell on the unhappy Albrecht, and each gave him a mortal wound, and then all five fled in different directions. The whole horrible affair took place full in view of Leopold and the army on the other side of the river, and when it became possible for any of them to cross, they found that the Emperor had just expired, with his head in the lap of a poor woman.

The murderers escaped into the Swiss mountains, expecting shelter there; but the stout, honest men of the cantons were resolved not

to have any connection with assassins, and refused to protect them. Johann himself, after long and miserable wanderings in disguise, bitterly repented, owned his crime to the Pope, and was received into a convent; Eschenbach escaped, and lived fifteen years as a cowherd. The others all fell into the hands of the sons and daughters of Albrecht, and woful was the revenge that was taken upon them, and upon their innocent families and retainers.

That Leopold, who had seen his father slain before his eyes, should have been deeply incensed, was not wonderful, and his elder brother Frederick, as Duke of Austria, was charged with the execution of justice; but both brothers were horribly savage and violent in their proceedings, and their sister Agnes surpassed them in her atrocious thirst for vengeance. She was the wife of the King of Hungary, very clever and discerning, and also supposed to be very religious, but all better thoughts were swept away by her furious passion. She had nearly strangled Eschenbach's infant son with her own hands, when he was rescued from her by her own soldiers, and when she was watching the beheading of sixty-three vassals of another of the murderers, she repeatedly exclaimed, "Now I bathe in May dew." Once, indeed, she met with a stern rebuke. A hermit, for whom she had offered to build a convent, answered her, "Woman, God is not served by shedding innocent blood and by building convents out of the plunder of fam-

ilies, but by compassion and forgiveness of injuries."

Rudolf von der Wart received the horrible sentence of being broken on the wheel. On his trial the Emperor's attendant declared that Der Wart had attacked Albert with his dagger, and the cry, "How long will ye suffer this carrion to sit on horseback?" but he persisted to the last that he had been taken by surprise by the murderer. However, there was no mercy for him; and by the express command of Queen Agnes, after he had been bound upon one wheel, and his limbs broken by heavy blows from the executioner, he was fastened to another wheel, which was set upon a pole, where he was to linger out the remaining hours of his life. His young wife, Gertrude, who had clung to him through all his trial, was torn away and carried off to the Castle of Kyburg; but she made her escape at dusk, and found her way, as night came on, to the spot where her husband hung still living upon the wheel. That night of agony was described in a letter ascribed to Gertrude herself. The guard left to watch fled at her approach, and she prayed beneath the scaffold; and then, heaping some heavy logs of wood together, was able to climb up near enough to embrace him and stroke back the hair from his face, whilst he entreated her to leave him, lest she should be found there, and fall under the cruel revenge of the Queen, telling her that thus it would be possible to increase his suffering.

"I will die with you," she said, "'tis for that

I came, and no power shall force me from you;" and she prayed for the one mercy she hoped for, speedy death for her husband.

In Mrs. Hemans' beautiful words—

"And bid me not depart," she cried,
"My Rudolf, say not so;
This is no time to quit thy side,
Peace, peace, I can not go!
Hath the world aught for me to fear
When death is on thy brow?
The world! what means it? Mine is here!
I will not leave thee now.

"I have been with thee in thine hour
Of glory and of bliss;
Doubt not its memory's living power
To strengthen me through this.
And thou, mine honor'd love and true,
Bear on, bear nobly on;
We have the blessed heaven in view,
Whose rest shall soon be won."

When day began to break, the guard returned, and Gertrude took down her stage of wood and continued kneeling at the foot of the pole. Crowds of people came to look, among them the wife of one of the officials, whom Gertrude implored to intercede that her husband's sufferings might be ended; but though this might not be, some pitied her, and tried to give her wine and confections, which she could not touch. The priest came and exhorted Rudolf to confess the crime, but with a great effort he repeated his former statement of innocence.

A band of horsemen rode by. Among them was the young Prince Leopold and his sister

Agnes herself, clad as a knight. They were very angry at the compassion shown by the crowd, and after frightfully harsh language commanded that Gertrude should be dragged away; but one of the nobles interceded for her, and when she had been carried away to a little distance, her entreaties were heard, and she was allowed to break away and come back to her husband. The priest blessed Gertrude, gave her his hand and said, "Be faithful unto death, and God will give you the crown of life," and she was no further molested.

Night came on, and with it a stormy wind, whose howling mingled with the voice of her prayers, and whistled in the hair of the sufferer. One of the guards brought her a cloak. She climbed on the wheel, and spread the covering over her husband's limbs; then fetched some water in her shoe, and moistened his lips with it, sustaining him above all with her prayers, and exhortations to look to the joys beyond. He had ceased to try to send her away, and thanked her for the comfort she gave him. And still she watched when morning came again, and noon passed over her, and it was verging to evening, when for the last time he moved his head; and she raised herself so as to be close to him. With a smile, he murmured, "Gertrude, this is faithfulness till death," and died. She knelt down to thank God for having enabled her to remain for that last breath—

"While even as o'er amartyr's grave
She knelt on that sad spot,
And, weeping, blessed the God who gave
Strength to forsake it not!"

She found shelter in a convent at Basle, where she spent the rest of her life in a quiet round of prayer and good works; till the time came when her widowed heart should find its true rest forever.

WHAT IS BETTER THAN SLAYING A DRAGON.

1332.

The next story we have to tell is so strange and wild, that it would seem better to befit the cloudy times when history had not yet been disentangled from fable, than the comparatively clear light of the fourteenth century.

It took place in the island of Rhodes. This Greek isle had become the home of the Knights of St. John, or Hospitaliers, an order of sworn brethren who had arisen at the time of the Crusades. At first they had been merely monks, who kept open house for the reception of the poor penniless pilgrims who arrived at Jerusalem in need of shelter, and often of nursing and healing. The good monks not only fed and housed them, but did their best to cure the many diseases that they would catch in the toilsome journey in that feverish climate; and thus it has come to pass that the word *hospitium* which in Latin only means an inn, has in modern languages given birth, on the one hand, to hotel, or lodging-house, on the other, to hospital, or house of healing. The Hospital at Jerusalem was called

after St. John the Almoner, a charitable Bishop of old, and the brethren were hospitaliers. By and by, when the first Crusade was over, and there was a great need of warriors to maintain the Christian cause in Jerusalem, the Hospitaliers thought it a pity that so many strong arms should be prevented from exerting themselves, by the laws that forbade the clergy to do battle, and they obtained permission from the Pope to become warriors as well as monks. They were thus all in one—knights, priests, and nurses; their monasteries were both castles and hospitals; and the sick pilgrim or wounded Crusader was sure of all the best tendance and medical care that the times could afford, as well as of all the ghostly comfort and counsel that he might need, and, if he recovered, he was escorted safely down to the seashore by a party strong enough to protect him from the hordes of robber Arabs. All this was for charity's sake, and without reward. Surely the constitution of the Order was as golden as its badge—the eight-pointed cross —which the brethren wore round their neck. They wore it also in white over their shoulder upon a black mantle. And the knights who had been admitted to the full honors of the Order had a scarlet surcoat, likewise with the white cross, over their armor. The whole brotherhood was under the command of a Grand Master, who was elected in a chapter of all the knights, and to whom all vowed to render implicit obedience.

Good service in all their three capacities had

been done by the Order as long as the Crusaders were able to keep a footing in the Holy Land; but they were driven back step by step, and at last, in 1291, their last stronghold at Acre was taken, after much desperate fighting, and the remnant of the Hospitaliers sailed away to the isle of Cyprus, where, after a few years, they recruited their forces, and in 1307, captured the island of Rhodes, which had been a nest of Greek and Mahometan pirates. Here they remained, hoping for a fresh Crusade to recover the Holy Sepulcher, and in the meantime fulfilling their old mission as the protectors and nurses of the weak. All the Mediterranean Sea was infested by Corsairs from the African coast and the Greek isles, and these brave knights, becoming sailors as well as all they had been before, placed their red flag with its white cross at the masthead of many a gallant vessel that guarded the peaceful traveler, hunted down the cruel pirate, and brought home his Christian slave, rescued from laboring at the oar, to the Hospital for rest and tendance. Or their treasures were used in redeeming the captives in the pirate cities. No knight of St. John might offer any ransom for himself save his sword and scarf; but for the redemption of their poor fellow-Christians their wealth was ready, and many a captive was released from toiling in Algiers or Tripoli, or still worse, from rowing the pirate vessels, chained to the oar, between the decks, and was restored to health and returned to his friends, blessing the day he had

been brought into the curving harbor of Rhodes, with the fine fortified town of churches and monasteries.

Some eighteen years after the conquest of Rhodes, the whole island was filled with dismay by the ravages of an enormous creature, living in a morass at the foot of Mount St. Stephen, about two miles from the city of Rhodes. Tradition calls it a dragon, and whether it were a crocodile or a serpent is uncertain. There is reason to think that the monsters of early creation were slow in becoming extinct, or it is not impossible that either a crocodile or a python might have been brought over by storms or currents from Africa, and have grown to a more formidable size than usual in solitude among the marshes, while the island was changing owners. The reptile, whatever it might be, was the object of extreme dread; it devoured sheep and cattle, when they came down to the water, and even young shepherd-boys were missing. And the pilgrimage to the Chapel of St. Stephen, on the hill above its lair, was especially a service of danger, for pilgrims were believed to be snapped up by the dragon before they could mount the hill.

Several knights had gone out to attempt the destruction of the creature, but not one had returned, and at last the Grand Master, Helion de Villeneuve, forbade any further attacks to be made. The dragon is said to have been covered with scales that were perfectly impenetrable either to arrows or any cut-

ting weapon; and the severe loss that encounters with him had cost the Order, convinced the Grand Master that he must be let alone.

However, a young knight, named Dieudonné de Gozon, was by no means willing to acquiesce in the decree; perhaps all the less because it came after he had once gone out in quest of the monster, but had returned, by his own confession, without striking a blow. He requested leave of absence, and went home for a time to his father's castle of Gozon, in Languedoc; and there he caused a model of the monster to be made. He had observed that the scales did not protect the animal's belly, though it was almost impossible to get a blow at it, owing to its tremendous teeth, and the furious strokes of its length of tail. He therefore caused this part of his model to be made hollow, and filled with food, and obtaining two fierce young mastiffs, he trained them to fly at the under side of the monster, while he mounted his war-horse, and endeavored to accustom it likewise to attack the strange shape without swerving.

When he thought the education of horse and dogs complete, he returned to Rhodes; but fearing to be prevented from carrying out his design, he did not land at the city, but on a remote part of the coast, whence he made his way to the Chapel of St. Stephen. There, after having recommended himself to God, he left his two French squires, desiring them to return home if he were slain, but to watch and come to him if he killed the dragon, or were

only hurt by it. He then rode down the hill-side, and towards the haunt of the dragon. It roused itself at his advance, and at first he charged it with his lance, which was perfectly useless against the scales. His horse was quick to perceive the difference between the true and the false monster, and started back, so that he was forced to leap to the ground; but the two dogs were more staunch, and sprang at the animal, whilst their master struck at it with his sword, but still without reaching a vulnerable part, and a blow from the tail had thrown him down, and the dragon was turning upon him, when the movement left the undefended belly exposed. Both mastiffs fastened on it at once, and the knight, regaining his feet, thrust his sword into it. There was a death-grapple, and finally the servants, coming down the hill, found their knight lying apparently dead under the carcass of the dragon. When they had extricated him, taken off his helmet, and sprinkled him with water, he recovered, and presently was led into the city amid the ecstatic shouts of the whole populace, who conducted him in triumph to the palace of the Grand Master.

We have seen how Titus Manlius was requited by his father for his breach of discipline. It was somewhat in the same manner that Helion de Villeneuve received Dieudonne. We borrow Schiller's beautiful version of the conversation that took place, as the young knight, pale, with his black mantle rent, his shining armor dented, his scarlet surcoat

stained with blood, came into the Knights' Great Hall.

'Severe and grave was the Master's brow.
Quoth he, 'A hero bold art thou,
By valor 'tis that knights are known;
A valiant spirit hast thou shown;
But the first duty of a knight,
Now tell, who vows for Christ to fight
And bears the Cross on his coat of mail.'
The listeners all with fear grew pale,
While, bending lowly, spake the knight,
His cheeks with blushes burning,
'He who the Cross would bear aright
Obedience must be learning.' "

Even after hearing the account of the conflict, the Grand Master did not abate his displeasure.

"My son, the spoiler of the land
Lies slain by thy victorious hand—
Thou art the people's god, but so
Thou art become thine Order's foe;
A deadlier foe thine heart has bred
Than this which by thy hand is dead,
That serpent still the heart defiling
To ruin and to strife beguiling.
It is that spirit rash and bold,
That scorns the bands of order;
Rages against them uncontrolled
Till earth is in disorder.

" 'Courage by Saracens is shown,
Submission is the Christian's own;
And where our Saviour, high and holy,
Wandered a pilgrim poor and lowly
Upon that ground with mystery fraught,
The fathers of our Order taught
The duty hardest to fulfill
Is to give up our own self-will—

Thou art elate with glory vain.
Away then from my sight!
Who can his Saviour's yoke disdain,
Bears not his Cross aright.'

"An angry cry burst from the crowd,
The hall rang with their tumult loud;
Each knightly brother prayed for grace,
The victor downward bent his face,
Aside his cloak in silence laid,
Kissed the Grand Master's hand, nor stayed.
The Master watched him from the hall,
Then summoned him with loving call,
'Come to embrace me, noble son,
Thine is the conquest of the soul;
Take up the Cross, now truly won,
By meekness and by self-control.' "

The probation of Dieudonne is said to have been somewhat longer than the poem represents, but after the claims of discipline had been established, he became a great favorite with stern old Villeneuve, and the dragon's head was set up over the gate of the city, where Thevenot professed to have seen it in the seventeenth century, and said that it was larger than that of a horse, with a huge mouth and teeth and very large eyes. The name of Rhodes is said to come from a Phœnician word, meaning a serpent, and the Greeks called this the isle of serpents, which is all in favor of the truth of the story. But, on the other hand, such traditions often are prompted by the sight of the fossil skeletons of the dragons of the elder world, and are generally to be met with where such minerals prevail as are found in the northern part of Rhodes. The tale is disbelieved by many, but it is hard to suppose

it an entire invention, though the description of the monster may have been exaggerated.

Dieudonne de Gozon was elected to the Grand Mastership after the death of Villeneuve, and is said to have voted for himself. If so, it seems as if he might have had, in his earlier days, an overweening opinion of his own abilities. However, he was an excellent Grand Master, a great soldier, and much beloved by all the poor peasants of the island, to whom he was exceedingly kind. He died in 1353, and his tomb is said to have been only inscribed with these words, "Here lies the Dragon Slayer."

THE KEYS OF CALAIS.

1347.

Nowhere does the continent of Europe approach Great Britain so closely as at the straits of Dover, and when our sovereigns were full of the vain hope of obtaining the crown of France, or at least of regaining the great possessions that their forefathers had owned as French nobles, there was no spot so coveted by them as the fortress of Calais, the possession of which gave an entrance into France.

Thus it was that when, in 1346, Edward III. had beaten Philippe VI. at the battle of Crecy, the first use he made of his victory was to march upon Calais, and lay siege to it. The walls were exceedingly strong and solid, mighty defenses of masonry, of huge thickness and like rocks for solidity, guarded it, and the king knew that it would be useless to attempt a direct assault. Indeed, during all the middle ages, the modes of protecting fortifications were far more efficient than the modes of attacking them. The walls could be made enormously massive, the towers raised to a great height, and the defenders so completely sheltered by battlements that they could not easily be injured, and could take aim from the top of their tur-

rets, or from their loop-hole windows. The gates had absolute little castles of their own, a moat flowed round the walls full of water, and only capable of being crossed by a drawbridge, behind which the portcullis, a grating armed beneath with spikes, was always ready to drop from the archway of the gate and close up the entrance. The only chance of taking a fortress by direct attack was to fill up the moat with earth and faggots, and then raise ladders against the walls; or else to drive engines against the defenses, battering-rams which struck them with heavy beams, mangonels which launched stones, sows whose arched wooden backs protected troops of workmen who tried to undermine the wall, and moving towers consisting of a succession of stages or shelves, filled with soldiers, and with a bridge with iron hooks, capable of being launched from the highest story to the top of the battlements. The besieged could generally disconcert the battering-ram by hanging beds or mattresses over the walls to receive the brunt of the blow, the sows could be crushed with heavy stones, the towers burnt by well-directed flaming missiles, the ladders overthrown, and in general the besiegers suffered a great deal more damage than they could inflict. Cannon had indeed just been brought into use at the battle of Crecy, but they only consisted of iron bars fastened together with hoops and were as yet of little use, and thus there seemed to be little danger to a well guarded city from any enemy outside the walls.

King Edward arrived before the place with all his victorious army early in August, his good knights and squires arrayed in glittering steel armor, covered with surcoats richly embroidered with their heraldic bearings; his stout men-at-arms, each of whom was attended by three bold followers; and his archers, with their cross-bows to shoot bolts, and long bows to shoot arrows of a yard long, so that it used to be said that each went into battle with three men's lives under his girdle, namely the three arrows he kept there ready to his hand. With the king was his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, who had just won the golden spurs of knighthood so gallantly at Crecy when only in his seventeenth year, and likewise the famous Hainault knight, Sir Walter Mauny, and all that was noblest and bravest in England.

This whole glittering army, at their head the king's great royal standard bearing the golden lilies of France quartered with the lions of England, and each troop guided by the square banner, swallow-tailed pennon or pointed pennoncel of their leader, came marching to the gates of Calais, above which floated the blue standard of France with its golden flowers, and with it the banner of the governor, Sir Jean de Vienne. A herald, in a rich long robe embroidered with the arms of England, rode up to the gate, a trumpet sounding before him, and called upon Sir Jean de Vienne to give up the place to Edward, King of England and of France, as he claimed to be. Sir Jean made answer that he held the town for Phil-

ippe, King of France, and that he would defend it to the last; the herald rode back again and the English began the siege of the city.

At first they only encamped, and the people of Calais must have seen the whole plain covered with the white canvas tents, marshalled round the ensigns of the leaders, and here and there a more gorgeous one displaying the colors of the owner. Still there was no attack upon the walls. The warriors were to be seen walking about in the leathern suits they wore under their armor; or if a party was to be seen with their coats of mail on, helmet on head and lance in hand, it was not against Calais that they came; they rode out into the country, and by and by might be seen driving back before them herds of cattle and flocks of sheep or pigs that they had seized and taken away from the poor peasants; and at night the sky would show red lights where farms and homesteads had been set on fire. After a time in front of the tents, the English were to be seen hard at work with beams and boards, setting up huts for themselves, and thatching them over with straw or broom. These wooden houses were all ranged in regular streets, and there was a market-place in the midst, whither every Saturday came farmers and butchers to sell corn and meat, and hay for the horses; and the English merchants and Flemish weavers would come by sea and by land to bring cloth, bread, weapons, and everything that could be needed to be sold in this warlike market.

The governor, Sir Jean de Vienne, began to perceive that the King did not mean to waste his men by making vain attacks on the strong walls of Calais, but to shut up the entrance by land, and watch the coast by sea so as to prevent any provisions from being taken in, and so to starve him into surrendering. Sir Jean de Vienne, however, hoped that before he should be entirely reduced by famine, the King of France would be able to get together another army and come to his relief, and at any rate he was determined to do his duty, and hold out for his master to the last. But as food was already beginning to grow scarce, he was obliged to turn out such persons as could not fight and had no stores of their own, and so one Wednesday morning he caused all the poor to be brought together, men, women, and children, and sent them all out of the town, to the number of 1,700. It was probably the truest mercy, for he had no food to give them, and they could only have starved miserably within the town, or have hindered him from saving it for his sovereign; but to them it was dreadful to be driven out of house and home, straight down upon the enemy, and they went along weeping and wailing, till the English soldiers met them and asked why they had come out. They answered that they had been put out because they had nothing to eat, and their sorrowful famished looks gained pity for them. King Edward sent orders that not only should they go safely through his camp, but that they should all rest, and have the first

hearty dinner that they had eaten for many a day, and he sent every one a small sum of money before they left the camp, so that many of them went on their way praying along for the enemy who had been so kind to them.

A great deal happened whilst King Edward kept watch in his wooden town, and the citizens of Calais guarded their walls. England was invaded by King David II. of Scotland, with a great army, and the good Queen Philippa, who was left to govern at home in the name of her little son Lionel, assembled all the forces that were left at home, and sent them to meet him. And one autumn day, a ship crossed the Straits of Dover, and a messenger brought King Edward letters from his Queen to say that the Scots army had been entirely defeated at Nevil's Cross, near Durham, and that their King was a prisoner, but that he had been taken by a squire named John Copeland, who would not give him up to her.

King Edward sent letters to John Copeland to come to him at Calais, and when the squire had made his journey, the King took him by the hand saying, "Ha! welcome, my squire, who by his valor has captured our adversary the King of Scotland."

Copeland, falling on one knee, replied, "If God, out of His great kindness, has given me the King of Scotland, no one ought to be jealous of it, for God can, when He pleases, send His grace to a poor squire as well as to a great Lord. Sir, do not take it amiss if I did not surrender him to the orders of my lady the

Queen, for I hold my lands of you, and my oath is to you, not to her."

The King was not displeased with his squire's sturdiness, but made him a knight, gave him a pension of 500*l.* a year, and desired him to surrender his prisoner to the Queen, as his own representative. This was accordingly done, and King David was lodged in the Tower of London. Soon after, three days before All Saints' Day, there was a large and gay fleet to be seen crossing from the white cliffs of Dover, and the King, his son, and his knights rode down to the landing-place to welcome plump, fair-haired Queen Philippa, and all her train of ladies, who had come in great numbers to visit their husbands, fathers, or brothers in the wooden town. Then there was a great court, and numerous feasts and dances, and the knights and squires were constantly striving who could do the bravest deed of prowess to please the ladies. The King of France had placed numerous knights and men-at-arms in the neighboring towns and castles, and there were constant fights whenever the English went out foraging, and many bold deeds that were much admired were done. The great point was to keep provisions out of the town, and there was much fighting between the French who tried to bring in supplies, and the English who intercepted them. Very little was brought in by land, and Sir Jean de Vienne and his garrison would have been quite starved but for two sailors of Abbeville, named Marant and Mestriel, who knew the

coast thoroughly, and often, in the dark autumn evenings, would guide in a whole fleet of little boats, loaded with bread and meat for the starving men within the city. They were often chased by King Edward's vessels, and were sometimes very nearly taken, but they always managed to escape, and thus they still enabled the garrison to hold out.

So all the winter passed. Christmas was kept with brilliant feastings and high merriment by the King and his Queen in their wooden palace outside, and with lean cheeks and scanty fare by the besieged within. Lent was strictly observed perforce by the besieged, and Easter brought a betrothal in the English camp; a very unwilling one on the part of the bride-groom, the young Count of Flanders, who loved the French much better than the English, and had only been tormented into giving his consent by his unruly vassals because they depended on the wool of English sheep for their cloth works. So, though King Edward's daughter Isabel was a beautiful fair-haired girl of fifteen, the young Count would scarcely look at her; and in the last week before the marriage-day, while her robes and her jewels were being prepared, and her father and mother were arranging the presents they should make to all their court on the wedding-day, the bride-groom, when out hawking, gave his attendants the slip, and galloped off to Paris, where he was welcomed by King Philippe.

This made Edward very wrathful, and more than ever determined to take Calais. About

Whitsuntide he completed a great wooden castle upon the seashore, and placed in it numerous warlike engines, with forty men-at-arms and 200 archers, who kept such a watch upon the harbor that not even the two Abbeville sailors could enter it, without having their boats crushed and sunk by the great stones that the mangonels launched upon them. The townspeople began to feel what hunger really was, but their spirits were kept up by the hope that their King was at last collecting an army for their rescue.

And Philippe did collect all his forces, a great and noble army, and came one night to the hill of Sangate, just behind the English army, the knights' armor glancing and their pennons flying in the moonlight, so as to be a beautiful sight to the hungry garrison who could see the white tents pitched upon the hillside. Still there were but two roads by which the French could reach their friends in the town—one along the seacoast, the other by a marshy road higher up the country, and there was but one bridge by which the river could be crossed. The English King's fleet could prevent any troops from passing along the coast road, the Earl of Derby guarded the bridge, and there was a great tower, strongly fortified, close upon Calais. There were a few skirmishes, but the French King, finding it difficult to force his way to relieve the town, sent a party of knights with a challenge to King Edward to come out of his camp and do battle upon a fair field.

To this Edward made answer, that he had been nearly a year before Calais, and had spent large sums of money on the siege, and that he had nearly become master of the place, so that he had no intention of coming out only to gratify his adversary, who must try some other road if he could not make his way in by that before him.

Three days were spent in parleys, and then, without the slightest effort to rescue the brave, patient men within the town, away went King Philippe of France, with all his men, and the garrison saw the host that had crowded the hill of Sangate melt away like a summer cloud.

August had come again, and they had suffered privation for a whole year for the sake of the King who deserted them in their utmost need. They were in so grievous a state of hunger and distress that the hardiest could endure no more, for ever since Whitsuntide no fresh provisions had reached them. The Governor, therefore, went to the battlements and made signs that he wished to hold a parley, and the King appointed Lord Basset and Sir Walter Mauny to meet him, and appoint the terms of surrender.

The Governor owned that the garrison was reduced to the greatest extremity of distress, and requested that the King be contented with obtaining the city and fortress, leaving the soldiers and inhabitants to depart in peace.

But Sir Walter Mauny was forced to make answer that the King, his lord, was so much enraged at the delay and expense that Calais

had cost him, that he would only consent to receive the whole on unconditional terms, leaving him free to slay, or to ransom, or make prisoners whomsoever he pleased, and he was known to consider that there was a heavy reckoning to pay, both for the trouble the siege had cost him and the damage the Calaisians had previously done to his ships.

The brave answer was: "These conditions are too hard for us. We are but a small number of knights and squires, who have loyally served our lord and master as you would have done, and have suffered much ill and disquiet, but we will endure far more than any man has done in such a post, before we consent that the smallest boy in the town shall fare worse than ourselves. I therefore entreat you, for pity's sake, to return to the King and beg him to have compassion, for I have such an opinion of his gallantry that I think he will alter his mind."

The King's mind seemed, however, sternly made up; and all that Sir Walter Mauny and the barons of the council could obtain from him was that he would pardon the garrison and townsmen on condition that six of the chief citizens should present themselves to him, coming forth with bare feet and heads, with halters round their necks, carrying the keys of the town, and becoming absolutely his own to punish for their obstinacy as he should think fit.

On hearing this reply, Sir Jean de Vienne begged Sir Walter Mauny to wait till he could

consult the citizens, and, repairing to the market-place, he caused a great bell to be rung, at sound of which all the inhabitants came together in the town-hall. When he told them of these hard terms he could not refrain from weeping bitterly, and wailing and lamentation arose all round him. Should all starve together, or sacrifice their best and most honored after all suffering in common so long?

Then a voice was heard; it was that of the richest burgher in the town, Eustache de St. Pierre. "Messieurs, high and low," he said, "it would be sad pity to suffer so many people to die through hunger, if it could be prevented; and to hinder it would be meritorious in the eyes of our Savior. I have such faith and trust in finding grace before God, if I die to save my townsmen, that I name myself as first of the six."

As the burgher ceased, his fellow-townsmen wept aloud, and many, amid tears and groans, threw themselves at his feet in a transport of grief and gratitude. Another citizen, very rich and respected, rose up and said, "I will be second to my comrade, Eustache." His name was Jean Daire. After him, Jacques Wissant, another very rich man, offered himself as companion to these, who were both his cousins; and his brother Pierre would not be left behind: and two more unnamed, made up this gallant band of men willing to offer their lives for the rescue of their fellow-townsmen.

Sir Jean de Vienne mounted a little horse—for he had been wounded, and was still lame—

and came to the gate with them, followed by all the people of the town, weeping and wailing, yet, for their own sakes and their children's, not daring to prevent the sacrifice. The gates were opened, the governor and the six passed out, and the gates were again shut behind them. Sir Jean then rode up to Sir Walter Mauny, and told him how these burghers had voluntarily offered themselves, begging him to do all in his power to save them; and Sir Walter promised with his whole heart to plead their cause. De Vienne then went back into the town, full of heaviness and anxiety; and the six citizens were led by Sir Walter to the presence of the King, in his full court. They all knelt down, and the foremost said: "Most gallant King, you see before you six burghers of Calais, who have all been capital merchants, and who bring you the keys of the castle and town. We yield ourselves to your absolute will and pleasure, in order to save the remainder of the inhabitants of Calais, who have suffered much distress and misery. Condescend, therefore, out of your nobleness of mind, to have pity on us."

Strong emotion was excited among all the barons and knights who stood round, as they saw the resigned countenances, pale and thin with patiently-endured hunger, of these venerable men, offering themselves in the cause of their fellow-townsmen. Many tears of pity were shed; but the King still showed himself implacable, and commanded that they should be led away, and their heads stricken off. Sir

Walter Mauny interceded for them with all his might, even telling the King that such an execution would tarnish his honor, and that reprisals would be made on his own garrisons; and all the nobles joined in entreating pardon for the citizens, but still without effect; and the headsman had been actually sent for, when Queen Philippa, her eyes streaming with tears, threw herself on her knees amongst the captives, and said, "Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with much danger to see you, I have never asked you one favor; now I beg as a boon to myself, for the sake of the Son of the Blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these men!"

For some time the King looked at her in silence; then he exclaimed, "Dame, dame, would that you had been anywhere than here! You have entreated in such a manner that I can not refuse you; I therefore give these men to you, to do as you please with."

Joyfully did Queen Philippa conduct the six citizens to her own apartments, where she made them welcome, sent them new garments, entertained them with a plentiful dinner, and dismissed them each with a gift of six nobles. After this, Sir Walter Mauny entered the city, and took possession of it; retaining Sir Jean de Vienne and the other knights and squires till they should ransom themselves, and sending out the old French inhabitants; for the King was resolved to people the city entirely with English, in order to

gain a thoroughly strong hold of this first step in France.

The King and Queen took up their abode in the city; and the houses of Jean Daire were, it appears, granted to the Queen—perhaps, because she considered the man himself as her charge, and wished to secure them for him—and her little daughter Margaret was, shortly after, born in one of his houses. Eustache de St. Pierre was taken into high fever, and was placed in charge of the new citizens whom the King placed in the city.

Indeed, as this story is told by no chronicler but Froissart, some have doubted of it, and thought the violent resentment thus imputed to Edward III. inconsistent with his general character, but it is evident that the men of Calais had given him strong provocation by attacks on his shipping—piracies which are not easily forgiven—and that he considered that he had a right to make an example of them. It is not unlikely that he might, after all, have intended to forgive them, and have given the Queen the grace of obtaining their pardon, so as to excuse himself from the fulfilment of some over-hasty threat. But, however this may have been, nothing can lessen the glory of the six grave and patient men who went forth, by their own free will, to meet what might be a cruel and disgraceful death, in order to obtain the safety of their fellow-townsmen.

Very recently, in the summer of 1864, an instance has occurred of self-devotion worthy

to be recorded with that of Eustache de St. Pierre. The City of Palmyra, in Tennessee, one of the Southern States of America, had been occupied by a Federal army An officer of this army was assassinated and, on the cruel and mistaken system of taking reprisals, the general arrested ten of the principal inhabitants, and condemned them to be shot, as deeming the city responsible for the lives of his officers. One of them was the highly respected father of a large family, and could ill be spared. A young man, not related to him, upon this, came forward and insisted on being taken in his stead, as a less valuable life. And great as was the distress of his friend, this generous substitution was carried out, and not only spared a father to his children, but showed how the sharpest strokes of barbarity can still elicit light from the dark stone—light that but for these blows might have slept unseen.

THE BATTLE OF SEMPACH.

1397.

Nothing in history has been more remarkable than the union of the cantons and cities of the little republic of Switzzerland. Of differing races, languages, and, latterly, even religions—unlike in habits, tastes, opinions and costumes—they have, however, been held together, as it were, by pressure from without, and one spirit of patriotism has kept the little mountain republic complete for five hundred years.

Originally the lands were fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire, the city municipalities owning the Emperor for their lord; and the great family of Hapsburg, in whom the Empire became at length hereditary, was in reality Swiss, the country that gave them title lying in the canton of Aargau. Rodolf of Hapsburg was elected leader of the burghers of Zurich, long before he was chosen to the Empire; and he continued a Swiss in heart, retaining his mountaineer's open simplicity and honesty to the end of his life. Privileges were granted by him to the cities and the nobles, and the country was loyal and prosperous in his reign.

His son Albert, the same who was slain by his nephew Johann, as before mentioned per-

mitted those tyrannies of his bailiffs which goaded the Swiss to their celebrated revolt, and commenced the long series of wars with the House of Hapsburg—or, as it was now termed, of Austria—which finally established their independence.

On the one side, the Dukes of Austria and their ponderous German chivalry, wanted to reduce the cantons and cities to vassalage, not to the Imperial Crown, a distant and scarcely felt obligation, but to the Duchy of Austria; on the other, the hardy mountain peasants and stout burghers well knew their true position, and were aware that to admit the Austrian usurpation would expose their young men to be drawn upon for the Duke's wars, cause their property to be subject to perpetual rapacious exactions, and fill their hills with castles for ducal bailiffs, who would be little better than licensed robbers. No wonder, then, that the generation of William Tell and Arnold Melchthal bequeathed a resolute purpose of resistance to their descendants.

It was in 1397, ninety years since the first assertion of Swiss independence, when Leopold the Handsome, Duke of Austria, a bold but misproud and violent prince, involved himself in one of the constant quarrels with the Swiss that were always arising on account of the insulting exactions of toll and tribute in the Austrian border cities. A sharp war broke out, and the Swiss city of Lucerne took the opportunity of destroying the Austrian castle of Rothemburg, where the tolls had

been particularly vexatious, and of admitting to their league the cities of Sempach and Richensee.

Leopold and all the neighboring nobles united their forces. Hatred and contempt of the Swiss, as low-born and presumptuous, spurred them on; and twenty messengers reached the Duke in one day, with promises of support, in his march against Sempach and Lucerne. He had sent a large force in the direction of Zurich, with Johann Bonstetten, and advanced himself with 4,000 horse and 1,400 foot upon Sempach. Zurich undertook its own defence, and the Forest cantons sent their brave peasants to the support of Lucerne and Sempach, but only to the number of 1,300, who, on the 9th of July, took post in the woods around the little lake of Sempach. Meanwhile, Leopold's troops rode round the walls of the little city, insulting the inhabitants; one holding up a halter, which he said was for the chief magistrate; and another, pointing to the wreckless waste that his comrades were perpetrating on the fields, shouted, "Send a breakfast to the reapers." The burgomaster pointed to the woods where his allies lay hid, and answered, "My masters of Lucerne and their friends will bring it."

The story of that day was told by one of the burghers who fought in the ranks of Lucerne, a shoemaker, named Albert Tchudi, who was both a brave warrior and a master-singer; and as his ballad was translated by another master-singer, Sir Walter Scott, and is the spirited

record of an eye-witness, we will quote from him some of his descriptions of the battle and its golden deed.

The Duke's wiser friends proposed to wait till he could be joined by Bonstetten and the troops who had gone towards Zurich, and the Baron von Hasenberg, i. e., hare-rock, strongly urged this prudent counsel; but—

"'O Hare-Castle, thou heart of hare!'
Fierce Oxenstiern he cried,
'Shalt see then how the game will fare,'
The taunted knight replied."

"This very noon," said the younger knight to the Duke, "we will deliver up to you this handful of villains."

"And thus they to each other said,
Yon handful down to hew
Will be no boastful tale to tell,
The peasants are so few."

Characteristically enough, the doughty cobbler describes how the first execution that took place was the lopping off the long-peaked toes of the boots that the gentlemen wore chained to their knees, and which would have impeded them on foot; since it had been decided that the horses were too much tired to be serviceable in the action.

"There was lacing then of helmets bright,
And closing ranks amain,
The peaks they hewed from their boot points
Might well nigh load a wain."

They were drawn up in a solid compact body, presenting an unbroken line of spears,

projecting beyond the wall of gay shields and polished impenetrable armor.

The Swiss were not only few in number; but armor was scarce among them; some had only boards fastened on their arms by way of shields, some had halberts, which had been used by their fathers at the battle of Morgarten, others two-handed swords and battle-axes. They drew themselves up in form of a wedge and

> "The gallant Swiss confederates then
> They prayed to God aloud,
> And He displayed His rainbow fair
> Against a swarthy cloud."

Then they rushed upon the serried spears, but in vain. "The game was nothing sweet."

The banner of Lucerne was in the utmost danger, the Landamman was slain, and sixty of his men, and not an Austrian had been wounded. The flanks of the Austrian host began to advance so as to inclose the small peasant force, and involve it in irremediable destruction. A moment of dismay and stillness ensued. Then Arnold von Winkelrid of Unterwalden, with an eagle glance saw the only means of saving his country, and, with the decision of a man who dares by dying to do all things, shouted aloud: "I will open a passage."

> " 'I have a virtuous wife at home,
> A wife and infant son:
> I leave them to my country's care,
> The field shall yet be won!'

He rushed against the Austrian band
In desperate career.
And with his body, breast, and hand,
Bore down each hostile spear;

"Four lances splintered on his crest,
Six shivered in his side,
Still on the serried files he pressed,
He broke their ranks and died!"

The very weight of the desperate charge of this self-devoted man opened a breach in the line of spears. In rushed the Swiss wedge, and the weight of the nobles, armor and length of their spears was only encumbering. They began to fall before the Swiss blows, and Duke Leopold was urged to fly. "I had rather die honorably than live with dishonor," he said. He saw his standard-bearer struck to the ground, and seizing his banner from his hand, waved it over his head, and threw himself among the thickest of the foe. His corpse was found amid a heap of slain, and no less than 2,000 of his companions perished with him, of whom a third are said to have been counts, barons and knights.

"Then lost was banner, spear and shield
At Sempach in the flight;
The cloister vaults at Königsfeldt
Hold many an Austrian knight."

The Swiss only lost 200; but, as they were spent with the excessive heat of the July sun, they did not pursue their enemies. They gave thanks on the battle-field to the God of victories, and the next day buried the dead, carrying Duke Leopold and twenty-seven of his

most illustrious companions to the Abbey of Königsfeldt, where they buried him in the old tomb of his forefathers, the lords of Aargau, who had been laid there in the good old times, before the house of Hapsburg had grown arrogant with success.

As to the master-singer, he tells us of himself that

> "A merry man was he, I wot,
> The night he made the lay.
> Returning from the bloody spot
> Where God had judged the day."

On every 9th of July subsequently, the people of the country have been wont to assemble on the battle-field, around four stone crosses which mark the spot. A priest from a pulpit in the open air gives a thanksgiving sermon on the victory that insured the freedom of Switzerland, and another reads the narrative of the battle, and the roll of the brave 200, who, after Winkelried's example, gave their lives in the cause. All this is in the face of the mountains and the lake now lying in summer stillness, and the harvest fields whose crops are secure from marauders, and the congregation then proceed to the small chapel, the walls of which are painted with the deed of Arnold von Winkelried, and the other distinguished achievements of the confederates, and masses are sung for the souls of those who were slain. No wonder that men thus nurtured in the memory of such actions were, even to the fall of the French monarchy, among the most trustworthy soldiery of Europe.

THE CONSTANT PRINCE.

1433.

The illustrious days of Portugal were during the century and a half of the dynasty termed the House of Aviz, because its founder, Dom Joao I. had been grand master of the military order of Aviz.

His right to the throne was questionable, or more truly null, and he had only obtained the crown from the desire of the nation to be independent of Castille, and by the assistance of our own John of Gaunt, whose daughter, Philippa of Lancaster, became his wife, thus connecting the glories of his line with our own house of Plantagenet

Philippa was greatly beloved in Portugal, and was a most noble-minded woman, who infused her own spirit into her children. She had five sons, and when they had all attained an age to be admitted to the order of knighthood, their father proposed to give a grand tournament in which they might evince their powers. This, however, seemed but play to the high-spirited youths, who had no doubt fed upon the story of the manner in which their uncle, the Black Prince, whose name was borne by the eldest, had won his spurs at Crecy. Their entreaty was, not to be carpet

knights dubbed in time of peace, and King Joao on the other hand objected to entering on a war merely for the sake of knighting his sons. At last Dom Fernando, the youngest of the brothers, a lad of fourteen, proposed that their knighthood should be earned by an expedition to take Ceuta from the Moors. A war with the infidel never came amiss, and was in fact regarded as a sacred duty: moreover, Ceuta was a nest of corsairs who infested the whole Mediterranean coast. Up to the present century the seaports along the African coast of the Mediterranean have been the hives of pirates, whose small rapid vessels were the terror of every unarmed ship that sailed in those waters, and whose descents upon the coasts of Spain, France and Italy rendered life and property constantly insecure. A regular system of kidnapping prevailed, prisoners had their fixed price, and were carried off to labor in the African dock-yards, or to be chained to the benches of the Moorish ships which their oars propelled, until either a ransom could be procured from their friends, or they could be persuaded to become renegades, or death put an end to their sufferings. A captivity among the Moors was by no means an uncomon circumstance even in the lives of Englishmen down to the eighteenth century, and pious persons frequently bequeathed sums of money for the ransom of the poorer captives.

Ceuta, perched upon the southern pillar of Hercules, was one of the most perilous of these dens of robbery, and to seize it might well

appear a worthy action, not only to the fiery princes, but to their cautious father. He kept his designs absolutely secret, and contrived to obtain a plan of the town by causing one of his vessels to put in there as in quest of provisions, while, to cover his preparations for war, he sent a public challenge to the Count of Holland, and a secret message at the same time, with the assurance that it was only a blind. These proceedings were certainly underhand, and partook of treachery; but they were probably excused in the king's own mind by the notion, that no faith was to be kept with unbelievers, and, moreover, such people as the Ceutans were likely never to be wanting in the supply of pretexts for attack.

Just as all was ready, the plague broke out in Lisbon, and the Queen fell sick of it. Her husband would not leave her and just before her death she sent for all her sons, and gave to each a sword, charging them to defend the widow and orphan, and to fight against the infidel. In the full freshness of their sorrow, the King and his sons set sail from the Bay of Lagos, in the August of 1415, with 59 galleys, 33 ships of war, and 120 transports; the largest fleet ever yet sent forth by the little kingdom, and the first that had left a Peninsular port with the banners and streamers of which the more northern armaments were so profuse.

The governor of Ceuta, Zala ben Zala, was not unprepared for the attack, and had collected 5,000 allies to resist the Christians; but a great storm having dispersed the fleet on the

first day of its appearance, he thought the danger over, and dismissed his friends. On the 14th of August, however, the whole fleet again appeared, and the King, in a little boat, directed the landing of his men, led by his sons, the Infantes Duarte and Henrique. The Moors gave way before them, and they entered the city with 500 men, among the flying enemy, and there, after a period of much danger, were joined by their brother Pedro. The three fought their way to a mosque, where they defended themselves till the King with the rest of his army made their way in. Zala ben Zala fled to the citadel, but, after one assault, quitted it in the night.

The Christian captives were released, the mosque purified and consecrated as a cathedral, a bishop was appointed, and the King gave the government of the place to Dom Pedro de Menezes, a knight of such known fidelity that the king would not suffer him to take the oath of allegiance. An attempt was made by the Moors four years later to recover the place; but the Infantes Pedro and Henrique hurried from Portugal to succor Menezes, and drove back the besiegers; whereupon the Moors murdered their King, Abu Sayd, on whom they laid the blame of the disaster.

On the day eighteen years of the taking of Ceuta, King Joao died of the plague at Lisbon, on the 14th of August, 1433. Duarte came to the throne; and, a few months after, his young brother, Fernando, persuaded him into

fitting out another expedition to Africa, of which Tangier should be the object.

Duarte doubted of the justice of the war, and referred the question to the Pope, who decided against it; but the answer came too late, the preparations were made, and the Infantes Henrique and Fernando took the command. Henrique was a most enlightened prince, a great mathematician and naval discoverer, but he does not appear to have made good use of his abilities on the present occasion; for, on arriving at Ceuta, and reviewing the troops they proved to have but 8,000, instead of 14,000, as they had intended. Still they proceeded, Henrique by land and Fernando by sea, and laid siege to Tangier, which was defended by their old enemy, Zala ben Zala. Everything was against them: their scaling-ladders were too short to reach to the top of the walls, and the Moors had time to collect in enormous numbers for the relief of the city, under the command of the kings of Fez and Morocco.

The little Christian army was caught as in a net, and, after a day's hard fighting, saw the necessity of re-embarking. All was arranged for this to be done at night; but a vile traitor, chaplain to the army, passed over to the Moors, and revealed their intention. The beach was guarded, and the retreat cut off. Another day of fighting passed, and at night hunger reduced them to eating their horses.

It was necessary to come to terms, and messengers were sent to treat with the two kings.

The only terms on which the army could be allowed to depart were that one of the Infantes should remain as a hostage for the delivery of Ceuta to the Moors. For this purpose Fernando offered himself, though it was exceedingly doubtful whether Ceuta would be restored; and the Spanish poet, Calderon, puts into his mouth a generous message to his brother the King, that they both were Christian princes, and that his liberty was not to be weighed in the scale with their father's fairest conquest.

Henrique was forced thus to leave his brave brother, and return with the remnants of his army to Ceuta, where he fell sick with grief and vexation. He sent the fleet home; but it met with a great storm, and many vessels were driven on the coast of Andalusia, where, by orders of the king, the battered sailors and defeated soldiers were most kindly and generously treated.

Dom Duarte, having in the meantime found out how insufficient an army his brothers had been sent forth with, had equipped a fresh fleet, the arrival of which at Ceuta cheered Henrique with hope of rescuing his brother; but it was soon followed by express orders from the King that Henrique should give up all such projects and return home. He was obliged to comply, but, unable to look Duarte in the face, he retired to his own estates at the Algarve.

Duarte convoked the States-general of the kingdom, to consider whether Ceuta should be

yielded to purchase his brother's freedom. They decided that the place was too important to be parted with, but undertook to raise any sum of money for the ransom; and if this were not accepted, proposed to ask the Pope to procaim a crusade for his rescue.

At first Fernando was treated well, and kept at Tangier as an honorable prisoner; but disappointment enraged the Moors, and he was thrown into a dungeon, starved, and maltreated. All this usage he endured with the utmost calmness and resolution, and could by no means be threatened into entreating for liberty to be won at the cost of the now Christian city where his knighthood had been won.

His brother Duarte meantime endeavored to raise the country for his deliverance; but the plague was still desolating Portugal, so that it was impossible to collect an army, and the infection at length seized on the King himself, from a letter which he incautiously opened, and he died, in his thirty-eighth year, in 1438, the sixth year of his reign, and the second of his brother's captivity. His successor, Alfonso V., was a child of six years old, and quarrels and disputes between the Queen Mother and the Infante Dom Pedro rendered the chance of redeeming the captivity of Fernando less and less.

The King of Castille, and even the Moorish King of Granada, shocked at his sufferings and touched by his constancy, proposed to unite their forces against Tangier for his deliv-

erance; but the effect of this was that Zala ben Zala made him over to Muley-Xeques, the King of Fez, by whom he was thrown into a dungeon without light or air. After a time, he was brought back to daylight, but only to toil among the other Christian slaves, to whom he was a model of patience, resignation, and kindness. Even his enemies became struck with admiration of his high qualities, and the King of Fez declared that he even deserved to be a Mahometan!

At last, in 1443, Fernando's captivity ended, but only by his death. Muley-Xeque caused a tall tower to be erected on his tomb, in memory of the victory of Tangier; but in 1473 two sons of Muley being made prisoners by the Portuguese, one was ransomed for the body of Dom Fernando, who was then solemnly laid in the vaults of the beautiful Abbey of Batalha, on the field of Aljubarota, which had given his father the throne. Universal honor attended the name of the Constant Prince, the Portuguese Regulus; and seldom as the Spanish admire anything Portuguese, a fine drama of the poet Calderon is founded upon that noble spirit which preferred dreary captivity to the yielding up his father's conquest to the enemies of his country and religion. Nor was this constancy thrown away; Ceuta remained a Christian city. It was held by Portugal till the house of Avis was extinguished in Dom Sebastiao, and since that time has belonged to the crown of Spain.

THE CARNIVAL OF PERTH.

1435.

It was bed time, and the old vaulted chambers of the Dominican monastery at Perth echoed with sounds that would seem incongruous in such a home of austerity, but that the disturbed state of Scotland rendered it the habit of her kings to attach their palaces to convents, that they themselves might benefit by the "peace of the Church," which was in general accorded to all sacred spots.

Thus it was that Christmas and Carnival time of 1435-36 had been spent by the Court in the cloisters of Perth, and the dance, the song and the tourney had strangely contrasted with the grave and self-denying habits to which the Dominicans were devoted in their neighboring cells. The festive season was nearly at an end, for it was the 20th of February, but the evening had been more than usually gay, and had been spent in games at chess, tables, or backgammon, reading romances of chivalry, harping and singing. King James himself, brave and handsome, and in the prime of life, was the blithest of the whole joyous party. He was the most accomplished man in his dominions; for though he had been basely kept a prisoner at Windsor throughout his boyhood

by Henry IV. of England, an education had been bestowed on him far above what he would have otherwise obtained; and he was naturally a man of great ability, refinement, and strength of character. Not only was he a perfect knight on horseback, but in wrestling and running, throwing the hammer, and "putting the stane," he had scarcely a rival, and he was skilled in all the learned lore of the time, wrote poetry, composed music both sacred and profane, and was a complete minstrel, able to sing beautifully and to play on the harp and organ. His Queen, the beautiful Joan Beaufort, had been the lady of his minstrelsy in the days of his captivity, ever since he had watched her walking on the slopes of Windsor Park, and wooed her in verses that are still preserved. They had now been eleven years married, and their Court was one bright spot of civilization, refinement, and grace, amid the savagery of Scotland. And now, after the pleasant social evening, the Queen, with her long fair hair unbound, was sitting under the hands of her tirewomen, who were preparing her for the night's rest; and the King, in his furred night-gown, was standing before the bright fire on the hearth of the wide chimney, laughing and talking with the attendant ladies.

Yet dark hints had already been whispered, which might have cast a shadow over that careless mirth. Always fierce and vindictive, the Scots had been growing more and more lawless and savage ever since the disputed suc-

cession of Bruce and Balliol had unsettled all royal authority, and led to one perpetual war with the English. The twenty years of James' captivity had been the worst of all—almost every noble was a robber chief, Scottish borderer preyed upon English borderer, Highlander upon Lowlander, knight upon traveler, every one who had armor upon him who had not; each clan was at deadly feud with its neighbor; blood was shed like water from end to end of the miserable land, and the higher the birth of the offender the greater the impunity he claimed.

Indeed, James himself had been brought next to the throne by one of the most savage and horrible murders ever perpetrated—that of his elder brother, David, by his own uncle; and he himself had probably been only saved from sharing the like fate by being sent out of the kingdom. His earnest words on his return to take the rule of this unhappy realm were these: "Let God but grant me life and there shall not be a spot in my realm where the key shall not keep the castle, and the bracken bush the cow, though I should lead the life of a dog to accomplish it."

This great purpose had been before James through the eleven years of his reign, and he had worked it out resolutely. The lawless nobles would not brook his ruling hand, and strong and bitter was the hatred that had arisen against him. In many of his transactions he was far from blameless; he was sometimes tempted to craft, sometimes to tyranny;

but his object was always a high and kingly one, though he was led by the horrible wickedness of the men he had to deal with more than once to forget that evil is not to be overcome with evil, but with good. In the main, it was his high and uncompromising resolution to enforce the laws upon high and low alike that led to the nobles' conspiracies against him; though, if he had always been true to his purpose of swerving neither to the right nor to the left, he might have avoided the last fatal offense that armed the murderer against his life.

The chief misdoers in the long period of anarchy had been his uncles and cousins; nor was it till after his eldest uncle's death that his return home had been possible. With a strong hand had he avenged upon the princes and their followers the many miseries they had inflicted upon his people; and in carrying out these measures he had seized upon the great earldom of Strathern, which had descended to one of their party in right of his wife, declaring that it could not be inherited by a female. In this he appears to have acted unjustly, from the strong desire to avail himself by any pretext of an opportunity of breaking the overweening power of the great turbulent nobles, and, to make up for the loss, he created the new earldom of Monteith, for the young Malise Graham, the son of the dispossessed earl. But the proud and vindictive Grahams were not thus to be pacified. Sir Robert Graham, the uncle of the young earl,

drew off into the Highlands, and there formed a conspiracy among other discontented men, who hated the resolute government that repressed their violence. Men of princely blood joined in the plot, and 300 Highland catherans were ready to accompany the expedition that promised the delights of war and plunder.

Even when the hard-worked king was setting forth to enjoy his holiday at Perth, the traitors had fixed upon that spot as the place of his doom; but the scheme was known to so many, that it could not be kept entirely secret, and warnings began to gather round the king. When, on his way to Perth, he was about to cross the Firth of Forth, the wild figure of a Highland woman appeared at his bridle rein, and solemnly warned him "that, if he crossed that water, he would never return alive." He was struck by the apparition, and bade one of his knights to inquire of her what she meant; but the knight must have been a dullard or a traitor, for he told the king that the woman was either mad or drunk, and no notice was taken of her warning.

There was likewise a saying abroad in Scotland, that the new year, 1436, should see the death of a king; and this same carnival night, James, while playing at chess with a young friend, whom he was wont to call the king of love, laughingly observed that "it must be you or I, since there are but two kings in Scotland—therefore, look well to yourself."

Little did the blithe monarch guess that at that moment one of the conspirators, touched

by a moment's misgivings, was hovering round, seeking in vain for an opportunity of giving him warning; that even then his chamberlain and kinsman, Sir Robert Stewart, was enabling the traitors to place boards across the moat for their passage, and to remove the bolts and bars of all the doors in their way. And the Highland woman was at the door, earnestly entreating to see the King if but for one moment! The message was even brought to him, but alas! he bade her wait till the morrow, and she turned away, declaring that she should never more see his face!

And now, as before said, the feast was over, and the King stood, gayly chatting with his wife and her ladies, when the clang of arms was heard, and the glare of torches in the court below flashed on the windows. The ladies flew to secure the doors. Alas! the bolts and bars were gone! Too late the warnings returned upon the King's mind, and he knew it was he alone who was sought. He tried to escape by the windows, but here the bars were but too firm. Then he seized the tongs, and tore up a board in the floor, by which he let himself down into the vault below, just as the murderers came rushing along the passage, slaying on their way a page named Walter Straiton.

There was no bar to the door. Yes, there was. Catherine Douglas, worthy of her name, worthy of the cognizance of the bleeding heart, thrust her arm through the empty staples to gain for her sovereign a few moments more for escape and safety! But

though true as steel, the brave arm was not as strong. It was quickly broken. She was thrust fainting aside, and the ruffians rushed in. Queen Joan stood in the midst of the room, with her hair streaming round her, and her mantle thrown hastily on. Some of the wretches even struck and wounded her, but Graham called them off, and bade them search for the King. They sought him in vain in every corner of the women's apartments, and dispersed through the other rooms in search of their prey. The ladies began to hope that the citizens and nobles in the town were coming to their help, and that the King might have escaped through an opening that led from the vault into the tennis-court. Presently, however, the King called to them to draw him up again, for he had not been able to get out of the vault, having a few days before caused the hole to be bricked up, because his tennis-balls used to fly into it and be lost. In trying to draw him up by the sheets, Elizabeth Douglas, another of the ladies, was actually pulled down into the vault; the noise was heard by the assassins, who were still watching outside, and they returned.

There is no need to tell of the foul and cruel slaughter that ensued, nor of the barbarous vengeance that visited it. Our tale is of golden, not of brazen deeds, and if we have turned our eyes for a moment to the Bloody Carnival of Perth, it is for the sake of the King, who was too upright for his bloodthirsty subjects, and, above all, for that of the noble-

hearted lady whose frail arm was the guardian of her sovereign's life in the extremity of peril.

In like manner, on the dreadful 6th of October, 1787, when the infuriated mob of Paris had been incited by the revolutionary leaders to rush to Versailles in pursuit of the Royal family, whose absence they fancied deprived them of bread and liberty, a woman shared the honor of saving her sovereign's life, at least for that time.

The confusion of the day, with the multitude thronging the courts and park of Versailes, uttering the most frightful threats and insults, had been beyond all description; but there had been a pause at night, and at two o'clock, poor Queen Marie Antoinette spent with horror and fatigue, at last went to bed, advising her ladies to do the same; but their anxiety was too great, and they sat up at her door. At half past four they heard musket-shots, and loud shouts, and while one awakened the Queen, the other, Madame Auguier, flew towards the place whence the noise came. As she opened the door, she found one of the royal body-guards, with his face covered with blood, holding his musket so as to bar the door while the furious mob was striking at him. He turned to the lady and cried, "Save the Queen, madame, they are come to murder her!" Quick as lightning, Madame Auguier shut and bolted the door, rushed to the Queen's bedside, and dragged her to the opposite door, with a petticoat just thrown over her. Behold, the door was fastened on the other side!

The ladies knocked violently, the King's valet opened it, and in a few minutes the whole family were in safety in the King's apartments. M. de Miomandre, the brave guardsman, who used his musket to guard the Queen's door instead of to defend himself, fell wounded; but his comrade, M. de Repaire, at once took his place, and, according to one account, was slain, and the next day his head, set upon a pike, was borne before the carriage in which the Royal Family was escorted back to Paris.

M. de Miomandre, however, recovered from his wounds, and a few weeks after, the Queen, hearing that his loyalty had made him a mark for the hatred of the mob, sent for him to desire him to quit Paris. She said that gold could not repay such a service as his had been, but she hoped one day to be able to recompense him more as he deserved; meanwhile, she hoped he would consider that as a sister might advance a timely sum to a brother, so she might offer him enough to defray his expenses at Paris, and to provide for his journey. In a private audience then he kissed her hand, and those of the King, and his saintly sister, Elizabeth, while the Queen gratefully expressed her thanks, and the King stood by, with tears in his eyes, but withheld by his awkward bashfulness from expressing the feelings that overpowered him.

Madame Auguier, and her sister, Madame Campan, continued with their royal lady until the next stage in that miserable downfall of all that was high and noble in unhappy France.

She lived through the horrors of the Revolution, and her daughter became the wife of Marshal Ney.

Well it is that the darkening firmament does but show the stars, and that when treason and murder surge round the fated chambers of royalty, their foulness and violence do but enhance the loyal self-sacrifice of such door-keepers as Catharine Douglas, Madame Auguier, or M. de Miomandre.

> Such deeds can woman's spirit do,
> O Catharine Douglas, brave and true!
> Let Scotland keep thy holy name
> Still first upon her ranks of fame.

THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN.

1440.

Of all the possessions of the old kingdom of Hungary, none was more valued than what was called the Crown of St. Stephen, so called from one which had, in the year 1000, been presented by Pope Sylvester II. to Stephen, the second Christian Duke, and first King of Hungary. A crown and a cross were given to him for his coronation, which took place in the Church of the Holy Virgin, at Alba Regale, also called in German Weissenburg, where thenceforth the Kings of Hungary were anointed to begin their troubled reigns, and at the close of them were laid to rest beneath the pavement, where most of them might have used the same epithet as the old Italian leader: "He rests here, who never rested before." For it was a wild realm, bordered on all sides by foes, with Poland, Bohemia, and Austria, ever casting greedy eyes upon it, and afterwards with the Turk upon the southern border, while the Magyars, or Hungarian nobles, themselves were a fierce and untameable race, bold and generous, but brooking little control, claiming a voice in choosing their own Sovereign, and to resist him, even by force of arms, if he broke the laws. No prince

had a right to their allegiance unless he had been crowned with St. Stephen's Crown; but if he had once worn that sacred circle, he thenceforth was held as the only lawful monarch, unless he should flagrantly violate the Constitution. In 1076, another crown had been given by the Greek Emperor to Geysa, King of Hungary, and the sacred crown combined the two. It had the two arches of the Roman crown, and the gold circlet of the Constantinopolitan; and the difference of workmanship was evident.

In the year 1439 died King Albert, who had been appointed King of Hungary in right of his wife, Queen Elizabeth. He left a little daughter only four years old, and as the Magyars had never been governed by a female hand, they proposed to send and offer their crown, and the hand of their young widowed Queen, to Wladislas, the King of Poland. But Elizabeth had hopes of another child, and in case it should be a son, she had no mind to give away its rights to its father's throne. How, then, was she to help herself among the proud and determined nobles of her court? One thing was certain, that if once the Polish king were crowned with St. Stephen's Crown, it would be his own fault if he were not King of Hungary as long as he lived; but if the crown were not to be found, of course he could not receive it, and the fealty of the nobles would not be pledged to him.

The most trustworthy person she had about her was Helen Kottenner, the lady who had the

charge of her little daughter, Princess Elizabeth, and to her she confided her desire that the crown might be secured, so as to prevent the Polish party from getting access to it. Helen herself has written down the history of these strange events, and of her own struggles of mind, at the risk she ran, and the doubt whether good would come of the intrigue; and there can be no doubt that, whether the Queen's conduct were praiseworthy or not, Helen dared a great peril for the sake purely of loyalty and fidelity. "The Queen's commands," she says, "sorely troubled me; for it was a dangerous venture for me and my little children, and I turned it over in my mind what I should do, for I had no one to take counsel of but God alone; and I thought if I did it not, and evil arose therefrom, I should be guilty before God and the world. So I consented to risk my life on this difficult undertaking; but desired to have some one to help me." This was permitted; but the first person to whom the Lady of Kottenner confided her intention, a Croat, lost his color from alarm, looked like one half dead, and went at once in search of his horse. The next thing that was heard of him was that he had had a bad fall from his horse, and had been obliged to return to Croatia, and the Queen remained much alarmed at her plans being known to one so faint-hearted. However, a more courageous confidant was afterwards found in a Hungarian gentleman, whose name has become illegible in Helen's old manuscript.

The crown was in the vaults of the strong Castle of Plintenburg, also called Vissegrad, which stands upon a bend of the Danube, about twelve miles from the twin cities of Buda and Pesth. It was in a case, within a chest, sealed with many seals, and since the King's death, it had been brought up by the nobles, who closely guarded both it and the Queen, into her apartments, and there examined and replaced it in the chest. The next night one of the Queen's ladies upset a wax taper, without being aware of it, and before the fire was discovered, and put out, the corner of the chest was singed, and a hole burnt in the blue velvet cushion that lay on the top. Upon this the lords had caused the chest to be taken down again into the vault, and had fastened the door with many locks and seals. The castle had further been put in charge of Ladislas von Gara, the Queen's cousin, and Ban, or hereditary commander, of the border troops, and he had given it over to a Burggraf, or seneschal, who had placed his bed in the chamber where was the door leading to the vaults. The Queen removed to Komorn, a castle higher up the Danube, in charge of her faithful cousin, Count Uiric of Eily taking with her her little daughter Elizabeth, Helen Kottenner, and two other ladies. This was the first stage on the journey to Presburg, where the nobles had wished to lodge the Queen, and from thence she sent back Helen to bring the rest of the maids of honor and her goods to join her at Komorn. It was early spring,

and snow was still on the ground, and the Lady of Kottenner and her faithful nameless assistant travelled in a sledge; but two Hungarian noblemen went with them, and they had to be most careful in concealing their arrangements. Helen had with her the Queen's signet, and keys; and her friend had a file in each shoe, and keys under his black velvet dress.

On arriving in the evening, they found that the Burggraf had fallen ill, and could not sleep in the chamber leading to the vault, because it belonged to the ladies' chambers, and that he had therefore put a cloth over the padlock of the door and sealed it. There was a stove in the room, and the maidens began to pack up their clothes there, an operation that lasted till eight o'clock; while Helen's friend stood there, talking and jesting with them, trying all the while to hide the files, and contriving to say to Helen, "Take care that we have a light." So she begged the old housekeeper to give her plenty of wax tapers, as she had many prayers to say. At last every one was gone to bed, and there only remained in the room with Helen, an old woman, whom she had brought with her, who knew no German, and was fast asleep. Then the accomplice came back through the chapel, which opened into this same hall. He had on his black velvet gown and felt shoes, and was followed by a servant, who, Helen says, was bound to him by oath, and had the same Christian name as himself, this being evi-

dently an additional bond of fidelity. Helen, who had received from the Queen all the keys of this outer room, let them in, and, after the Burggraf's cloth and seal had been removed, they unlocked the padlock, and the other two locks of the outer door of the vault, and the two men descended into it. There were several other doors, whose chains required to be filed through and their seals and locks broken, and to the ears of the waiting Helen the noise appeared fatally loud. She says, "I devoutly prayed to God and the Holy Virgin, that they would support and help me, yet I was in greater anxiety for my soul than for my life, and I prayed to God that He would be merciful to my soul, and rather let me die at once there, than that anything should happen against His will, or that should bring misfortune on my country and people."

She fancied she heard a noise of armed men at the chapel door, but finding nothing there, believed—not in her own nervous agitation, a thing not yet invented—that it was a spirit, and returning to her prayers, vowed, poor lady, to make a pilgrimage to St. Maria Zell, in Styria, if the Holy Virgin's intercession obtained their success, and till the pilgrimage could be made, "to forego every Saturday night my feather bed!" After another false alarm at a supposed noise at the maiden's door, she ventured into the vault to see how her companions were getting on, when she found they had filed away all the locks, except that of the case containing the crown, and this

they were obliged to burn, in spite of their apprehension that the smell and smoke might be observed. They then shut up the chest, replaced the padlocks and chains with those they had brought for the purpose, and renewed the seals with the queen's signet, which bearing the royal arms, would baffle detection that the seals had been tampered with. They then took the crown into the chapel, where they found a red velvet cushion, so large that by taking out some of the stuffing a hiding-place was made in which the crown was deposited, and the cushion sewn up over it.

By this time day was dawning, the maidens were dressing, and it was the hour for setting off for Komorn. The old woman who had waited on them came to the Lady of Kottenner to have her wages paid, and be dismissed to Buda. While she was waiting, she began to remark on a strange thing lying by the stove, which, to the Lady Helen's great dismay, she perceived to be a bit of the case in which the crown was kept. She tried to prevent the old woman from noticing it, pushed it into the hottest part of the stove, and, by way of further precaution, took the old woman away with her, on the plea of asking the Queen to make her a bedeswoman at Vienna, and this was granted to her.

When all was ready, the gentleman desired his servant to take the cushion and put it into the sledge designed for himself and the Lady of Kottenner. The man took it on his shoulders, hiding it under an old ox-hide, with the

tail hanging down, to the laughter of all beholders. Helen further records the trying to get some breakfast in the market-place and finding nothing but herrings, also the going to mass, and the care she took not to sit upon the holy crown, though she had to sit on its cushion in the sledge. They dined at an inn, but took care to keep the cushion in sight, and then in the dusk crossed the Danube on the ice, which was becoming very thin, and halfway across it broke under the maiden's carriage, so that Helen expected to be lost in the Danube, crown and all. However, though many packages were lost under the ice, her sledge got safe over, as well as all the ladies, some of whom she took into her conveyance, and all safely arrived at the castle of Komorn late in the evening.

The very hour of their arrival a babe was born to the Queen, and to her exceeding joy it was a son. Count von Eily, hearing "that a king and friend was born to him," had bonfires lighted, and a torchlight procession on the ice that same night, and early in the morning came the Archbishop of Gran to christen the child. The Queen wished her faithful Helen to be godmother, but she refused in favor of some lady whose family it was probably needful to propitiate. She took off the little princess Elizabeth's mourning for her father and dressed her in red and gold, all the maidens appeared in gay apparel, and there was great rejoicing and thanksgiving

when the babe was christened Ladislas, after a sainted kind of Hungary.

The peril was, however, far from ended; for many of the Magyars had no notion of accepting an infant for their king, and by Easter, the King of Poland was advancing upon Buda to claim the realm to which he had been invited. No one had discovered the abstraction of the crown, and Elizabeth's object was to take her child to Weissenburg, and there have him crowned, so as to disconcert the Polish party. She had sent to Buda for cloth of gold to make him a coronation dress, but it did not come in time, and Helen therefore shut herself into the chapel at Komorn, and, with doors fast bolted, cut up a rich and beautiful vestment of his grandfather's, the Emperor Sigismund, of red and gold, with silver spots, and made it into a tiny coronation robe, with surplice and humeral, or shoulder-piece, the stole and banner, the gloves and shoes. The Queen was much alarmed by a report that the Polish party meant to stop her on her way to Weissenburg; and if the baggage should be seized and searched, the discovery of the crown might have fatal consequences. Helen, on this, observed that the King was more important than the crown, and that the best way would be to keep them together; so she wrapped up the crown in a cloth, and laid it under the mattress of his cradle, with a long spoon for mixing his pap upon the top, so said the Queen, he might take care of his crown himself.

On Tuesday before Whit Sunday the party set out, escorted by Count Ulric, and several other knights and nobles. After crossing the Danube in a large boat, the Queen and her little girl were placed in a carriage, or more probably a litter, the other ladies rode, and the cradle and its precious contents were carried by four men; but this the poor little Lassla, as Helen shortens his lengthy name, resented so much, that he began to scream so loud that she was forced to dismount and carry him in her arms, along a road rendered swampy by much rain.

They found all the villages deserted by the peasants, who had fled into the woods, and as most of their lords were of the other party, they expected an attack, so the little king was put into the carriage with his mother and sister, and the ladies formed a circle round it "that if any one shot at the carriage we might receive the stroke." When the danger was over the child was taken out again, for he would be content nowhere but in the arms of either his nurse or of faithful Helen, who took turns to carry him on foot nearly all the way, sometimes in a high wind which covered them with dust, sometimes in great heat, sometimes in rain so heavy that Helen's fur pelisse, with which she covered his cradle, had to be wrung out several times. They slept at an inn, round which the gentlemen lighted a circle of fires, and kept watch all night.

Weissenburg was loyal, five hundred armed gentlemen came out to meet them, and on

Whitsun Eve they entered the city, Helen carrying her little king in her arms in the midst of a circle of these five hundred holding their naked swords aloft. On Whit Sunday, Helen rose early, bathed the little fellow, who was twelve weeks old that day, and dressed him. He was then carried in her arms to the church, beside his mother. According to the old Hungarian customs the choir door was closed—the burghers were within, and would not open till the new monarch should have taken the great coronation oath to respect the Hungarian liberties and laws.

This oath was taken by the Queen in the name of her son, the doors were opened, and all the train entered, the little princess being lifted up to stand by the organ, lest she should be hurt in the throng. First Helen held her charge up to be confirmed, and then she had to hold him while he was knighted, with a richly adorned sword bearing the motto "Indestructible," and by a stout Hungarian knight called Mikosch Weida who struck with such a good will that Helen felt the blow on her arm, and the Queen cried out to him not to hurt the child.

The Archbishop of Gran anointed the little creature, dressed him in the red and gold robe, and put on his head the holy crown, and the people admired to see how straight he held up his neck under it; indeed, they admired the loudness and strength of his cries, when, as the good lady records, "the noble king had little pleasure in his coronation, for he wept

aloud." She had to hold him up for the rest of the service, while Count Ulric of Eily held the crown over his head, and afterwards to seat him in a chair in St. Peter's Church, and then he was carried home in his cradle, with the Count holding the crown over his head, and the other regalia borne before him.

And thus Ladislas became King of Hungary at twelve weeks old, and was then carried off by his mother into Austria for safety. Whether this secret robbery of the crown, and coronation by stealth, was wise or just on the mother's part is a question not easy of answer—though of course she deemed it her duty to do her utmost for her child's rights. Of Helen Kottenner's deep fidelity and conscientious feeling there can be no doubt, and her having acted with her eyes fully open to the risk she ran her trust in Heaven overcoming her fears and terrors, rendered her truly a heroine.

The crown has had many other adventures, and afterwards was kept in an apartment of its own in the castle of Ofen, with an antechamber guarded by two grenadiers. The door was of iron, with three locks, and the crown itself was contained in an iron chest with five seals. All this, however, did not prevent it from being taken away and lost in the Revolution of 1849.

Meda Thomas.
C. H. S.